POSTHUMOUS WORKS

OF

THE REV. THOMAS CHALMERS, D.D. LL.D.

EDITED BY

THE REV. WILLIAM HANNA, LL.D.

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DAILY SCRIPTURE READINGS.

JUDGES I. 1-15.—The work of fighting against the Canaanites who remained in the land is here begun. The Israelites asked counsel of the Lord respecting it, by Urim and Thummim—the evidence of a yet strong religious feeling in the nation. Judah and Simeon, as conterminous, were naturally associated in this enterprise .... Bezek is marked as to the south by east of Jerusalem, and not more than twelve miles from it—proving how closely they were still hemmed in by the aborigines of the country .... One should feel that what was done to Adoni-bezek was a deed of wanton cruelty—though one of retributive justice, as is acknowledged by Adoni-bezek himself, who marks the hand of God in it; and let us therefore hope that the principle of God's known will in the matter led to this act of mutilation .... After the capture of Jerusalem there remained much to be done on the south of it .... The story of Caleb, given before in Joshua xv. 16-19, is here repeated. It was probably given there in anticipation.

16-27.—The city of palm-trees is said to be Jericho. The Kenites were the descendants of Jethro, and so, though

not Israelites, lived in the midst of them. Hormah is in the tribe of Simeon—after the taking of which they were quite in the way of Gaza, and Askelon, and Ekron, which they afterwards took; but these must have been subsequently recovered by the Philistines—seeing that we read of them as their cities. They subdued, but did not extirpate them; and so their enemies still remained amongst them in force.

Benjamin, it seems, did not drive the Jebusites out of their part of Jerusalem as Judah had driven them out of theirs. (verse 8.) The border of the two tribes ran through the town. How closely, then, the Israelites and natives of the land must have been intermingled! The entire capture of Jerusalem was an after exploit.

The same work of completing the subjugation was carried on by the other tribes.... There is a Luz marked in the maps, not far from Beth-el, and which may be the second Luz. Beth-el is illustrious in ancient story. (Gen. xii. 8; xxviii. 19.)

28-36.—This inability to drive out the natives utterly, seems to have extended over the whole of Canaan. How was it with the Israelites on the east side of Jordan? or were they laid under the order of exterminating the aborigines? But though the Canaanites were not all driven out, yet when Israel became strong, they were so far subjugated as to be laid under tribute. Doubtless many in the progress of these conquests, instead of waiting to be slaughtered, took flight—often by sea—and hence the colonizations of Greece and other parts of Europe may some of them have proceeded from the wars of Joshua. The Philistines are by some authors identified with the Pelasgi, who made descents both on Greece and Italy.... It

is interesting to note among the towns within the territory of Asher, the Zidon and the Acre of our own day.

The Amorites had occupancy on both sides of Jordan. The children of Joseph got more the upper hand of them than the children of Dan. Ephraim seems to have helped Dan, as Aijalon and Shaalbim are both in the territory of the latter.... The last verse, respecting the Amorites, seems to indicate the extent of their occupation, even to the south of Judea—Akrabbim being, I understand, on the stream which ran into the southern extremity of the Dead Sea.

JUDGES II. 1-6.—It is not said whether this angel of the Lord was simply a human messenger, or a being of the angelic class, or the Angel of the Covenant. He spake, we are told, unto all the children of Israel, and his words were those of remonstrance and rebuke. God would never break His covenant with them, though they, by breaking their covenant with Him, might forfeit its stipulations. And it seems that in disobedience of His express charge, they were now forming leagues with the people of the land. God, in not driving them out, was not falling away from His promise; for they had violated its conditions, and so strikingly exemplified the general truth, that if we will not place temptations beyond our reach, by either removing ourselves from them, or them from ourselves, when we might, God will leave us to fall under the power of them.—Save me, O God, from the guilt and danger of those who wilfully run themselves into snares, or will not flee for safety when snares are brought near them and around them.... The expostulation of the angel had a good effect, at least for a time, upon the people; and both their tears and their sacrifices prove that their religious

sensibilities still retained somewhat of their original force and freshness.

7-23.—There is here inserted a repetition of what was said in Joshua xxiv. 28-31, as an introduction to what follows. The natural and rebellious bias of the children of Israel returned on the removal of those strong counteractive appliances from without, which, in the shape of miracles and judgments, had been brought to bear upon it. They lapsed into the idolatry of the people around them. The anger of the Lord was therefore let forth upon them; and if they did not complete the subjugation, and far less the extirpation of their enemies, it was because of the judicial impotency which they had brought upon themselves. Yet did God temper, and doubtless with all wisdom, the visitations wherewith, for the purposes of discipline and correction, He was pleased to exercise them. He raised up Judges, whom, nevertheless, they often disobeyed and thwarted. Yet was the severity of God notwithstanding tempered with compassion.... What an important testimony is here given to the power of official authority, even though vested in a single man: One righteous governor stayed the degeneracy of the people, and under him they lived in security. With his death there was a relapse both into wickedness and wretchedness. There is here given beforehand a compend of the history of the era on which we are now entering; and besides, such a view of the principle on which God left His people to be exercised by the nations around them, as carries us at least a certain way back into the mystery of God's permission of evil; or why it is that the tares are mingled with the wheat, that all might be lessoned in their respective school, and that the hearts of all men,

whether good or bad, might be manifest.—Ours truly is a state *in transitu.*

JUDGES III. 1-11.—There seems another purpose to be intimated here in the leaving of so many nations, and that is, not merely for the moral and spiritual, but for the military discipline of the Israelites; or, in other words, that they may be provided with a school of war as well as a school of virtue. There is an obscurity in verse 2; but this seems clear, that the nations were left not merely for the design which had been already mentioned, but also to teach the generations of the children war, in order that they more especially who before knew nothing thereof might know the method of carrying it on. And they would further learn the difference between having God for a helper and having Him for an adversary when they went to battle with their foes... We further see, in verse 4, the mighty importance ascribed by God in His methods of government to the manifestation of character. We have here recorded their distinct and perhaps earliest departure from God after their settlement in Canaan; and now begin the alternations of the Jewish history, which strikingly evince the special Theocracy under which their nation was placed.... It forms a sort of connecting link between the books of Joshua and Judges, when told that the first of these Judges was Othniel, the nephew of Caleb.

12-20.—Without an external appliance in the form of a divinely commissioned judge and ruler, we see how promptly and how pronely the children of Israel followed their native bias to idolatry. It is said, in this and the former instance, that God raised up the judge in behalf of His people. And here it is said too that he strengthened

the enemy who chastised them for their rebellion—in the present case Eglon, as in the former Chushan-rishathaim, into whose hand he is said to have sold them One cannot sympathize with the deed of assassination committed by Ehud, preceded as it was by a deceitful pretext on his part.—"The message from God unto thee," I at one time, by rather a violent accommodation, made a short-hand sermon on, wherewith I was well pleased at the time, but have been since unable to recover it.... Ehud may have been divinely commissioned to do this evil deed; and, at all events, He who can make the wrath of man to praise Him also often accomplishes His ends by means of human perfidy and cruelty.

21-31.—These intervals of alternate peace and war serve as data for making up the Scripture chronology of this stage in the history of the Jews. One is pleased to read of these long intervals of repose, when, under their happy constitution, and with the abundance guaranteed to them by the Divine blessing, during those periods when exempted both from famine and the power of their enemies, they must have had much of individual and family enjoyment. This is beautifully pictured forth by Isaac Taylor, in one of his works, in which he describes the felicity of such periods when the Hebrews were in a state of security, each man living unmolested beside his own vine and under his own fig-tree, amid the quiet and prosperous occupations of husbandry, aloof from the feverish anxieties of commerce, and having no adversary within their borders, there was none to make them afraid.... It seems to us quite in keeping with the character of these rude and primitive times, when we read of such exploits as those of Shamgar, when

strength was of more avail than the tactics of a skilful generalship.

JUDGES IV. 1-10.—Ehud must have lived to a great age that the Israelites enjoyed rest after he had delivered them for eighty years. It is likely that Shamgar had but a brief government, and it may be during the extreme senility of Ehud, when it appears from ch. v. verse 6, that Judea was thrown into a state of great disorder.... The phrase "sold them," may signify brought them into slavery—and is derived from the process of selling slaves.... It would seem as if the nations which were spared had still their kings and their localities—Jabin the king of Canaan reigning in Hazor.... The judgeship could be vested in females, as in Deborah. There is a beautiful and antique simplicity in the description of her dwelling—under a remarkable and noted tree, still named from her at the time of writing the book of Judges—the palm-tree of Deborah. Barak seems to have been of the tribe of Naphtali; and he obtained his forces principally from this tribe and that of Zebulun. Kishon is a very celebrated historical river in Palestine, some of the greatest of the country's battles having been fought upon its banks. There seems to have been a sacred confidence placed by Barak in Deborah, and she speaks to him in the language of a prophetess. Hazor is marked far north and in the tribe of Naphtali. Kedesh-Naphtali is in the same tribe; but Kishon considerably distant to the south, and on the opposite border of Zebulun which adjoins Naphtali. Barak seems to have returned along with Deborah to Kedesh whence she had called him.

11-24.—The Kenites were settled in Judah; but Heber, one of the family, had removed northwards, and fixed his

habitation near Kedesh, in the tribe of Naphtali. If they were the Kenites who showed Sisera where Barak was, this is in keeping with what is stated afterwards, (ver. 17,) that there was peace between them and him at that time. Harosheth of the Gentiles is marked as in the tribe of Naphtali. It would appear that from Kedesh (verse 10) Barak had gone southward to Mount Tabor, which is close on Kishon.... One cannot help a recoil from the deed of Jael—in which there were both treachery and cruelty—sorely aggravated to our natural feeling by the circumstance of her being a woman. Yet, as we shall often have occasion to observe in Scripture history, God does employ the instrumentality of what in itself is evil for the furtherance of His own purposes. Nor are we to know in how far there might not have been a Divine commission for the particular act which would completely legalize it, even as the commission given to the Israelites did to exterminate the Canaanites. Certain it is that Jael received a blessing for what she had done, from the mouth of a prophetess.

JUDGES v. 1-7.—This is one of the noblest effusions of olden poetry, and of poetry set to music—sung as well as recited. The willing help of the people is an homage rendered to those who did offer themselves—for we find an exception made against certain of the tribes. I cannot imagine anything higher than the state and sublimity wherewith this Ode of celebration is ushered in, and the effect of God's presence, or at least the manifestation of His forth-puttings and his power, is depicted. The Song begins with a reference to God's interposal in former times. There is a difference of opinion whether the reference is two-fold,

embracing both God's appearance for His people when they first entered the Holy Land, and the descent on Sinai—or whether there be a reference to the latter only, for which some countenance is derived from Deut. xxxiii. 2, which is most intelligible on the supposition that the approach of the Divine glory to Sinai was from the east. However this might be settled, there is soon a transition downward to more recent times—to the days of Shamgar who effected a like deliverance to that which called forth this Song of celebration—when the Philistines overran the land and forced the people into skulking-places. The inhabitants after this had to retire from the unwalled and unfortified villages till the days of our illustrious prophetess—so beautifully designated as a mother in Israel, and which is still felt and applied as the most characteristic description that can be given of a venerable matron full of faith and good works, and a signal blessing, by the influence of her example, to the country or neighbourhood where she lives.

8-18.—Their idolatry was the cause of their adversities. The war carried victory against them to their gates, and the people were disarmed. The prophetess then offers the tribute of her acknowledgments to those who came willingly to the work of delivering their country from the hand of their enemies. There strikes me as something of the beautifully oriental picturesque in her description of the chiefs among the people, as they who ride on white asses. She calls on them, and the officers of justice, and travellers, to join in her gratulations for the security which they now enjoyed. They could not repair to the daily rendezvous of wells without being exposed to assaults; but from this they were now delivered. They could now go down

to the gates, where justice was peacefully administered, or they could fearlessly pass through them into the open country, now cleared of its invaders. Then did God make the poor and despised remnant of Israel prevail over the mighty men of Sisera's multitude, and cause in particular Deborah and Barak to have the rule over them. She then proceeds to celebrate the tribes who took a share in this work of patriotism. Out of Ephraim was there still the spirit that had before prevailed against Amalek. (Ex. xvii. 8, &c.) Some came also from among the people of Benjamin. Machir supplied officers. There are traces (Num. xxxii. 39) of the warlike habits of this family. The auxiliaries from Zebulun either supplied the requisite penmanship for orders and correspondence, &c., or laid down their professional employments for a time, and became soldiers. Due homage is rendered to Issachar, and especially to Zebulun and Naphtali, but reflections cast on the inaction of Reuben, Gilead, Dan, and Asher. The divisions of Reuben were either internal, or imply their separation from the common enterprise; and this seems to have stirred up deep and indignant feelings against them. Asher abode among his creeks, or to repair the breaches of the sea upon his coast.

19-31.—Taanach and Megiddo are on the left of the river Kishon. This magnificent Ode proceeds in the highest of all poetical strains to its conclusion. The stars in their courses fighting against Sisera, is a truly sublime conception. Meroz was probably some town which refused its quota of auxiliaries. Nor can we imagine aught more picturesque, more Ossianic, than the representation of the ladies looking out for the return of their lord—while the blessing given upon Jael indicates a Divine command, or

at least a strong and urgent sense of patriotism in her mind—else it were the revolting barbarity of an Amazonian. Both the cruelty and licentiousness of the age break forth in this effusion. It were strange now for women of rank to describe, as is here done, the spoils of the war; but, making allowances for all that appertained either to the country, or to the period in the history of the world, this must be confessed to be one of the most elevated and heart-stirring poems that has come down to us from ancient times.

August, 1843.

JUDGES VI. 1-10.—The book of Judges may be regarded as a record of the discipline of that peculiar Theocracy under which the children of Israel were placed. After a respite of forty years, did they again relapse into evil; and God delivered them into the hand of Midian. Let us observe how what in common history would be noted as but a series of events, is in this history directly referred to the design and agency of God. There is a Midian contiguous to Moab, (Num. xxii. 4,) which, in conjunction with Amalek and the children of the east—as Moabites, Ammonites, and Edomites—invaded Israel, and wasted the country onward to its south-west border, whereabout Gaza was; yet, notwithstanding their provocation, when in their extremity they cried unto God, He sent them a prophet, not here named, and who remonstrated with them, and explained to them the cause of their great calamity—reminding them of their former greatest deliverance, and therefore of God's claim upon their allegiance, whom, nevertheless, they had disregarded and disobeyed: They lapsed into idolatry, and did homage to the gods of the Amorites.

11-16.—It is not said what effect the expostulations of the prophet had on the people in general; but it is likely he may have impressed some—and Gideon at least seems to have been fitted for the message recorded in this passage. It seems to have been a message from the Angel of the Covenant. Gideon addresses him by the title Lord, as expressive of a merely angelic or even human respect; but the direct narrative, in verse 14, styles him the Lord Jehovah. The same in verse 16. He said, however, as much to Gideon as to give him the impression of a supernatural visiter. The promise to be with him, and Gideon's acquiescence or confidence in that promise, imply as much. The prediction that he (Gideon) should smite the Midianites, was not thrown back, but entertained by him in such a way as to make a gradual preparation for still greater disclosures. His demand for such miracles as he at first speaks of with something like a tone of scepticism, as his fathers told of, but which he almost speaks of as questionable reports—seeing that the Lord was giving them no deliverance now—marks the exercises of a mind that had dwelt much on the state of his country. The sense which he expresses of his own weakness and insufficiency bespeaks our kindly interest in him at the outset of this his history.

17-32.—Gideon still presses for a miracle; and it was granted to him. After it was effected, and the supernatural visiter had taken his departure, Gideon still calls him an angel—after which it is said that the Lord (Jehovah) spoke unto him. The angel had by this time disappeared—nevertheless, the voice might have proceeded from him, or, in other words, the angel and the Lord (Jehovah) are one and the same—which we gather more

clearly from the preceding dialogue, where, before the disappearance, the alternation is carried on by Gideon speaking to the angel of the Lord on the one hand, and the Lord (Jehovah) replying to him on the other. Jehovah-shalom is the Lord our Peace. The word prefixed to Baal denotes strife: Let Baal be the adversary of him who has thrown down his altar—let him avenge his own cause. Joash quieted the mob very much as the town-clerk of Ephesus did. It was not for them to take the matter into their hands. The one, however, made an appeal to the magistrate—the other to the idolatrous god himself.

33-40.—Jezreel is in the territory of Manasseh, within the limits of which Gideon's city also was. There was a spirit given to Gideon commensurate with the dangers of his position and the difficulties by which he was encompassed.—My God, Thou knowest my difficulties! Give me both the courage and the counsel to meet them.... The Abi-ezerites turned in his favour.—Lord, give me the co-operation of those who have hitherto, if not adverse, been indifferent and sluggish.... Asher acquitted itself better this time than in the days of Deborah and Barak.... The miracle of Gideon's fleece is a truly notable one. It marks the patience and condescension of God, that in compliance with His servant's request, He varied the miracle. Gideon, in his prayer for this second manifestation, seems sensible that by giving vent to it he hazarded the displeasure of God, who is grieved by our unbelief—even as our Saviour, like unto God, repeatedly was upon earth.—Let us make the right application of this characteristic in the nature and administration of God; and while it rebukes our distrust, let it encourage our confidence.

JUDGES VII. 1-7.—It was Gideon who was named Jerubbaal, because the enemy of Baal. Moreh is marked as near to Jezreel; and it is stated to be there where Abraham offered up Isaac. My impression was that this Moreh was the same with one of the mounts of Jerusalem. God wanted to teach the Israelites a direct dependence on Himself.—Let me not be discouraged, O God, and wean me at the same time from all my earthly confidences. The gradual diminutions, whether of men or money, are perhaps the very trials wherewith God may exercise our faith. It may not be by numbers or by the amount of contributions that we are to be saved. There is no saying through what ordeal of disappointments He means us to pass—so as to put a mockery on all our proud calculations. O that I could retain my confidence in God at all times!—and for this purpose let me keep a conscience void of offence. Thou knowest my reigning infirmity, O God. Let me be one of the select few, if Thou meanest to save by few and not by many.

8-25.—These are deeply interesting incidents, and compose one of the richest of our Bible stories. God never left Himself without a witness; and we find here the conveyance of Himself to the minds even of pagans and idolaters. The dream was interpreted by an unconscious prophet, but in the hearing of one who was conscious, and who could make an intelligent use thereof. There is no saying, however, to what extent this dream might have terrified and paralyzed the Midianites. The watch-word of the Israelites bore a close resemblance to the word of the Midianite interpreter; and so far as this was known throughout the host it was fitted to strike a note of terror into their hearts. Under the imagination of an over-

powering host of foes, and in the dark, they struck at random—each man his fellow.... The places named in verse 22, are all in the tribe of Manasseh, and southward from the field of action. They fled by a wide dispersion. Ephraim was still further south and beyond them. Gideon's messengers could move more swiftly than the discomfited multitude; and by taking the waters which run into the Jordan, as they fled southward to Beth-barah on the Jordan and in the tribe of Reuben, they could give them sore annoyance in crossing these several streams. The men of verse 23, who now joined in the pursuit, were probably such men as had moved off from the three hundred, but were still at hand and ready enough to join in the pursuit, though they shrunk from the battle. ... The places of Oreb and Zeeb must have been named after the men.

JUDGES VIII. 1-9.—The tribe of Ephraim was conterminous with Gideon's own tribe; and the place of his residence was close upon its border. This may have made it all the more provoking to the Ephraimites that they should have been neglected, though we do not read of their complaints till we read of Gideon's victory. He did not call them at the first, but he called them to join in the pursuit afterwards; and his answer, full of mildness and the politeness of true humility, was a pacifying one and turned away their wrath—for it ascribed more to them than to himself, more to their doings after the Midianites had been put to flight than to all he had done before then. The men of Ephraim were on their way from the place of battle to Jordan; and they took Oreb and Zeeb and slew them. The gleanings of Ephraim were

thus spoken of as better than the vintage of Abi-ezer—Gideon's own place and people. Gideon did not desist from the pursuit, but crossed Jordan after the Midianites, whose kings were still with the flying army. He pursued with his three hundred men; and the smallness of their number had probably emboldened the insolence of the princes of Succoth when they refused provisions to his little band.... The phrase "faint yet pursuing," has by a very fair accommodation been spiritualized.

10-21.—How much the army had been reduced—only fifteen thousand remaining after a hundred and twenty thousand had fallen! Was it only with his three hundred men that he discomfited this remainder? Then the miracle was kept up, I should think, even though it is here said that the *host* was secure. On his return he took vengeance on the two cities that had insulted him. He *taught* the men of Succoth—he chastised them, and literally fulfilled his threat (verse 7) upon them. He tore their flesh with thorns and briers. It taught them a lesson, certainly. The men of Penuel received a harder measure of punishment. It may have only, however, been some of them, perhaps those who answered him in verse 8, for an example to the others. Tabor was in the land of Canaan, and there Zebah and Zalmunna slew the brethren of Gideon. We are not to suppose that he was now informed for the first time of their slaughter; but he put the question to draw out a manifestation of their guilt ere he inflicted its recompence upon them. One can enter into the natural relentings of Gideon's youthful son, and do homage to a certain wild heroism on the part of the kings in asking Gideon to fall on them. The ornaments on the camels' necks give a certain picturesqueness to this narrative,

though a narrative of blood. The saying, that "as the man is, so is his strength," might refer to the inadequacy of the youth for his assigned task, or to the claim which the kings put in for a more glorious death than by the hands of a stripling.

22-35.—The loyalty to Gideon was quite natural and proper.... Does this habit of the Ishmaelites still remain with the tenacity of other eastern customs in that they wear ear-rings? Gideon, who very properly ascribed all sovereignty to God, made an unfortunate request in making an ephod, even as Aaron did a golden calf, out of the people's golden ornaments. He probably wished for an ephod as an accompaniment to his altar. The proneness to will-worship and idolatry broke out again in this matter, even as the golden serpent became a snare to the children of Israel. Strange, that the mercies of God should have been always so followed up; and that the security of the Israelites after their deliverance from their enemies should have been thus perverted and misimproved!

The toleration of polygamy lasted for many ages among the Jewish people, because—says our Saviour—of the hardness of their hearts; the Divine administration thus suiting itself to the state of the subject on which it had to operate. After Gideon's death the people showed their characteristic fickleness, as well as their idolatrous tendencies. Gideon had an elevated place among the Judges of Israel, perhaps the next to Samuel in the consideration of Bible readers.

JUDGES IX. 1-6.—Abimelech was the son of one of Gideon's many wives—who was taken from Shechem in the tribe of Ephraim, the men of which place abetted him in

his foul design against his brethren, the sons of his father. The play of ambition had all the more scope in these unregulated times; and the deed here recorded is one of the bloodiest and most barbarous of its deeds. It is likely that though Gideon refused the sovereignty for any of his children, they may have had considerable authority in Israel—and so as to have constituted that sort of aristocratic power which furnished Abimelech with his argument. The notice of the one stone on which this parricidal slaughter took place, by making the description of it more graphical makes it all the more revolting.... There is a difference of opinion respecting Millo. Some think it signifies a city or place, differing then from the Millo of Jerusalem. Others that the house of Millo was the council-house—and as Millo signifies "full," that it denotes the council in full assemblage.... Baal-berith is the idol of Berith, and the house of Baal-berith may have been the temple of a god or goddess out of whose treasury the money was given. Berith was a goddess of the Phenicians; and hence, perhaps, the town of Berytus or Beyrout. Baal-berith was made a god by the Israelites. (ch. viii. 33.) It is marked in the map as a place a little way from Shechem.

7-21.—I asked Mr. Bonar, who tells me of places in Judea where from the brow of one hill they can speak over to another with a deep gulf between them; and this may account for the converse of which we read between hostile parties and in the hearing of multitudes. It is thus that from the top of Gerizim Jotham may have addressed the men of Shechem. What he propounds to them is put in the favourite and customary form of a parable. That wine should cheer God has been variously commented on

—either because Jotham was speaking to men tinged with idolatry; or because the plural, translated "God," might have been rendered "gods" or "judges"—thus making gods and men to be high and low; or because wine is used at sacrifices and in religious festivals. The object of the parable is to expose the grotesque ambition of Abimelech. There is a plain and forcible application following it up. If ye have rightly done by each other, Abimelech and ye men of Shechem, let there be mutual comfort betwixt you; but if not, let such a fury break out in the midst as that ye shall destroy each other. The situation of Jotham must have been such as that he could deliver the whole of this speech in safety—after which he ran off and escaped from their hands.

22-29.—The parable of Jotham at length received its verification, and this at the end of three years. And the fire which broke out between Abimelech and the men of Shechem was of God's sending. He sent an evil spirit between them, and this that the blood of the sons of Gideon might be avenged on b[illegible] parties. The state of society in Palestine at this time forcibly reminds us of Scotland, during the scenes and periods that are set forth in the Minstrelsy of the Border, with its raids, and murders, and its robberies.... It is not said where Gaal came from, but that he came over to the men of Shechem. Abimelech must have been by this time away from Shechem. It is probable that the Shechemites had by this time lapsed so far into idolatry, (verse 27,) as to look with hostile feeling on Jerubbaal, the adversary of Baal, and to found on this an antipathy against both his son and his son's servant; and that, looking back to their old history, (Gen. xxxiv.) they urged it as a nobler and better

thing that they should be ruled over by one of their own native dignitaries.

30-45.—Zebul seems to be playing here a double part —in real friendship with Abimelech, while he held out such an appearance of being at one with his enemies, as to hold converse and counsel with them. Gaal speaks as if he had confidence in Zebul, and Zebul is at no pains to undeceive, but rather to mislead him, and urge him on to destruction. For Abimelech had his full revenge upon the Shechemites. Fire came out in the first instance from Abimelech, and devoured the men of Shechem. Fire came out of the bramble and devoured them.... The thrusting out of Gaal by Zebul argues either that the people had through him, their governor, done this in a moment of fickleness or resentment for his defeat, or that they thought by this to pacify Abimelech, whom they did not pacify. The people went out from the city. Abimelech fought against and slew them—after which he took the city and destroyed it.

46-57.—There now follows the fulfilment of the second part of Jotham's curse. Fire came out of Shechem and devoured Abimelech. Altogether this is a busy and interesting story, and graphically told. It presents an instance of a prophecy and of its historical accomplishment, both of which are now long past—even as the curse and its fulfilment have long gone by on him who should rebuild Jericho. These curses afford a vivid illustration of the benefit of what might be termed short prophecies—where both the prediction and its verification were full in view of the men of that day, and which must therefore have had the effect of sustaining the faith of these past generations. There are many such prophecies which have

come down to us, and whereof the accomplishment has not been recorded, and which on this account may have in them the obscurity of those prophecies which are yet unfulfilled. The fulfilment clears up the prophecy; but we want this advantage alike in regard to those whose fulfilment is yet future, and to those whose fulfilment, though past, is unknown to us.

JUDGES X.—Here follows the account of two of the lesser Judges. It is a likely circumstance to have been memorable in these days, and fastened on as worthy of record—that one of them should have had thirty sons, riding on thirty ass-colts.

Then comes another of the endless rebellions of this people. It is truly instructive to find in their history the verification of the important lesson—the power and ascendency of an individual mind over the masses. How often do we find both the character and prosperity of the nation to flourish with the presence of a good judge or ruler; and how often their decline in both respects to be associated with the absence of these functionaries. It is true that in the regal part of their history, when the monarchy was never vacant, their degeneracies, and consequent adversities, were associated not with the want of a prince, but with the rule of a bad one, which confirms all the more a law of vast importance in human affairs—the power of single men over large aggregates of their species.... We have no information of the channel through which the celestial messages were brought; but let me lie open to the impression which the statement is naturally fitted to make—of the soul of the Lord being grieved for the misery of the children of Israel.

JUDGES XI. 1-11.—There is now introduced on this busy historical arena, one of Israel's most celebrated Judges, but whose celebrity is more founded on the extraordinary incidents of his life than on his own personal character. It is not the first instance in Scripture history of men of disreputable and immoral origin having become illustrious, and being honourably signalized. The vain men who were gathered to Jephthah were idle men, vacuous, unemployed. The Ammonites who lived contiguous to the northern half of Gilead, made invasion there. By this time Jephthah, at the head of his followers, may have acquired a sort of marauding or guerilla reputation. It would appear, from his reply to the invitation of the elders of Gilead, that his expulsion was not a mere family, but more probably a judicial act, by which he was pronounced as unfit for, or as having no right, because of his illegitimate descent, to an inheritance in the tribe. He was on vantage-ground now, however, for making his own terms with them.... Mizpeh was the place where Laban and Jacob had their last interview.... For the various solutions, some of which are obvious enough, of Jephthah's utterance there before the Lord, see Poole and others.

12-27.—There is something very interesting in these traditional appeals both of the Ammonites and of Jephthah. One likes to be thus carried upward from a high antiquity to a higher antiquity still. And one can enter into the national feelings which would accompany the national recollections on both sides—treasured up at the first, and transmitted downward from generation to generation—so as to keep alive the history of great events for many centuries in the popular mind, even without the aid of historical records. To understand the argument of Jephthah,

it should be recollected that the country between Arnon and Jabbok was not in the possession of either the Ammonites or Moabites when Israel took possession of it, but of the Amorites. We took what our God gave us by right of conquest—and conquest not from thee but from the Amorites; and wouldest not thou take what thy god Chemosh giveth, and keep it too? It is true that the Amorites took this land from them; but the Israelites did not recover it for them, but for themselves. Jephthah mentions that so far from invading the territories of their kinsmen, they subjected themselves to the utmost inconvenience for the purpose of avoiding it. He appeals to the more equitable conduct of the Moabites, who, though alike dispossessed by the Amorites, never thought of disputing the title of the Israelites to what they recovered, though originally their own. Finally, he pleads prescription, or the possessory right, grounded on the occupancy of 300 years.

28-33.—The king of the Ammonites was deaf to Jephthah's remonstrance, on which the Spirit of God came upon him, and animated and strengthened him for the contest. Mizpeh is on the south-east border of the half-tribe of Manasseh, and on the north of the river Jabbok. Hence he passed over to the Ammonites, and there he made his celebrated vow—certainly a rash one, and quite unwarranted, after the pledge that God had given of being with him and upon his side. It argued a remainder of distrust. There is something very difficult in the contemplation of the whole subject of this vow. It is good to be religiously observant of vows; but should a vow to do what otherwise would have been unlawful, bind the conscience? Better not to vow at all, than to vow and not pay. It

is doubtful whether it would not have been better in this instance that Jephthah had not paid than paid his vow. But it were clearly better than to have vowed and paid too, that he had not vowed at all.

34-40.—These expressions of grief on the part of Jephthah when he met his daughter, seem to indicate that his vow amounted to a literal sacrifice of her. It does not appear to me that they would have been called forth so feelingly, had the whole effect of his meeting with her first been the dedication of her to a perpetual virginity. On the other hand, it is not very clear why she should have so bewailed her virginity—excepting, perhaps, that she may have been her father's only child, and so have lamented that, by her death, the family was extinguished. But if there be anything in this, it might justify her father's grief for her becoming a nun through life. Altogether, it is an enigmatical story—though two things are palpable, the daughter's patriotism and the father's stern fidelity to his vow. He may have felt the obligation of Lev. xxvii. 29. At all events we find him in Heb. xi. 32, enumerated among those who had obtained a good report by faith.

JUDGES XII.—The Ephraimites quarrel with Jephthah on the same ground that they did with Gideon, and with as little justice. He had called them to join him at the first, and they refused, and would now put in for the credit of patriotism, after the deliverance had been effected without them. The Gileadites took fire at the corporate reproach which was cast upon them, and to which all men are peculiarly sensitive. They were stigmatized as vagabonds, or a sort of offscourings from Ephraim, he being

chief of the descendants of Joseph, and perhaps were even held in disgrace by the other half of their own tribe on this side of Jordan, so as that both Ephraimites and the Manassites in Canaan should regard as outcasts the Manassites of Gilead.... The inability to pronounce certain consonants is exemplified by the Welsh and others in our own day. The word Shibboleth has now become the name for a discriminating test by which to ascertain a man's party.

There now follows a series of minor Judges, whose simple memorabilia are here recorded as consisting in the number of sons and daughters, and other relatives, with the beasts they rode upon.

Judges xiii. 1-16.—This chapter ushers in one of the most remarkable passages in the history of what may be termed the heroic ages of the land of Israel. It is an affecting view of God, that when the people rebelled against Him, and were suffering in consequence, still, in the very heat of their provocations, does He provide a deliverer.... The message that came to Manoah's wife, when reported to himself, formed the subject of a prayer by him to the Lord Jehovah. There is reason to believe that this man was the Angel of the Covenant, or the Lord Jehovah Himself. And yet, when Manoah proposes to provide a kid for Him, He tells him that if it be as an offering he must offer it unto the Lord. But Manoah required to be thus instructed, for he was purposing to make the offering to Him, not as the Lord, but as what he understood Him to be, inferior even to an angel. It is with this view, and not as disclaiming divine honours, that he thus speaks to Manoah—analogously to that

occasion, when He sojourned with us in the flesh, and was addressed as a Good Master, upon which he replied, "Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is God." There is here a testimony for the confinement of all religious worship to God only. Manoah did not even know that he was an angel of God, (verse 16,) else, perhaps, he would not even have offered food to Him.

17-25.—The secrecy which the angel associates with His name impresses one with the sense of His being indeed Jehovah, or the possessor of that which was mysterious and incommunicable to all but God. But there afterwards follows more unequivocal proof of the Divinity of this supernatural visiter. Did not Manoah say truly to his wife that they had seen God? And did not his wife advert in her mind to the identical angel whom they had just seen, when she replied, "If the Lord (Jehovah) were pleased to kill us He would not have received this burnt-offering, nor *showed* us all these things, nor *told* us, *as at this time*, such things as these." Such were the preliminary steps to the birth of Samson, so famous in Scripture history. God never left Himself without a witness, nor did He wholly take away His Spirit from the children of men. How it moved Samson at times, we do not particularly know—not probably as it moved those prophets who were charged with words of inspiration, as messengers to the world—but moved him to the purposes and awakening in his breast of a high and holy and resolved patriotism.

JUDGES XIV. 1-9.—It has been well said that though there was a law against marrying with idolaters, lest there should be a consequent fall into idolatry, yet in the case

of Samson who was moved by the very opposite feeling of hostility to these worshippers of false gods, the law might have been dispensed with; and that perhaps he was led to this of God, whose Spirit, it was before said, did occasionally move him. The Spirit urged him to feats of strength as well as devices of policy; and the experience he had of his success might urge him to further and higher achievements. There was at length a mixture of affection as well as of policy in the matter of his alliance with the woman of Timnath—an instigation of policy having originated the affair, which by no means precluded the good liking that he afterwards had for her. There then occurred that circumstance on which he framed the riddle that he propounded to the Philistines.

10-20.—This riddle seems to me quite in keeping with the rude and early mental state of the people in that age—who had scarcely got beyond the first dawnings of intellect. The very proposal of it, however, looks like the commencement of Samson's designs against the enemies of Israel—the first occasion that he found against the Philistines, and in which, however, he was baffled by his own uxoriousness, that disappointed him now and afterwards ruined him. It is interesting to observe in conjunction with the strength and courage of Samson so much of sensibility to woman's tears—the relentings of a softer nature. He was defeated in this his first attempt; but what he lost in one way he repaired in another, and put forth his enormous strength when his ingenuity failed him. He was actuated by the Spirit of the Lord in his slaughter of the thirty Philistines—thus making good that it was of the Lord at the outset that he entered into that relationship with these people, which gave him so many

opportunities against them. One can enter into the mighty and terrible wrath of this affronted and so indignant warrior—under which he left the people and his wife in their hands, who gave her not, it is said, to Samson's friend, but to one whom he had used as a friend—perhaps to one who had performed some such customary service as that of bridegroom's friend at the marriage.

JUDGES XV. 1-8.—Though he had left his wife in a fit of anger, he was fain to return to her, and went with a present in his hand. The father's refusal to admit him seems grounded, not on any dislike of Samson, but because of the wife's second marriage, and so he proposes the younger sister for his acceptance. Samson is again set upon the work of retaliation, and encourages himself with the thought that the Philistines' ill-usage of him far out-ran the culpability of all that he meant to do against them. The time of wheat-harvest presents us with the vivid picture of fields partly in shocks and partly in standing corn; and one feels an interest in looking back on a spectacle so familiar to our own eyes, at this distant period of the world. The corn would then be in quite a combustible state, as being dead ripe. This exploit of Samson was followed up by a dreadful infliction upon his wife and father-in-law; and perhaps his grief for them may have mingled with the rage which prompted him to his next act of revenge. There is something picturesque in the wild heroism of the man now betaking himself to the top of the rock Etam and dwelling there.

9-20.—The Spirit of the Lord came upon Samson, so as to inspire the effort and give him the strength which made it available. There is something more in these feats than

the mere forth-putting of a man whom nature had made strong. The achievement seems to have been beyond the power even of his nature. The Spirit of God came upon him, and granted him extraordinary strength for the occasion. It is the case of a miracle, not on what was external to Samson, but in the powers of his own body—a case of preternatural strength, just as the gift of prophecy is a case of supernatural knowledge, or as an ordinary miracle is a case of supernatural command over outward things, or the outward elements. There was a natural inadequacy in both the instruments, both the ass's jaw-bone and the arm of Samson, for the achievement of so great a slaughter. God was with him; and worked miracles both by him and for him.

JUDGES XVI. 1-15.—Another example here of the impure and imperfect morality which characterized even the special servants and favourites of God in these earlier times; and another example in the life of Samson of a miraculous achievement done by his own strength, but a strength, we apprehend, supernaturally given to him for the occasion. This, however, does not preclude the idea of Samson being a man of singular and enormous strength naturally—for what he did in the most remarkable instances may have been done in virtue of a miraculous power grafted on a fitting subject. He was constitutionally a man of unbridled passion, and rushed into another matrimonial alliance, which in its issues proved fatal to him, so that he fell a victim to his uxoriousness at the last—the prey of a heartless and unprincipled woman. He at first withstood all her endeavours to wile from him the secret of his great strength; and by a series

of evasions put off for a little the hour of her ill-gotten triumph.

September, 1848.

16-21.—The time at last came when the daughters of the Philistines did rejoice, and the daughters of the uncircumcised triumphed. Both with his first and second wife Samson showed himself peculiarly alive to the force of female importunities; and apt to give way before the exhibition of female distress. In the former attempt to extort a secret from him, it is said that his wife lay sore upon him—in the present attempt, that his soul was vexed unto death. It looks a marvellous infatuation—the effect of melancholy weakness—that he should have been thus got the better of in the face of former palpable designs to give him up unto the Philistines—evincing the blindness of passion, and holding forth a most impressive lesson to beware of it. The secret came out at last. God had charged his mother before that he was born that no razor should come upon his head—making this the condition, whether of the strength which he had naturally or of the extraordinary visitations and gifts which he received of supernatural strength when the Spirit of God came upon him. He gave up his conscience and his vow to a perfidious woman, who on his locks being shorn off began to afflict him—a process which I cannot distinctly understand. At all events, his strength did depart from him; and he, when he awoke out of his sleep, was unconscious thereof; but the Philistines, in obedience to the call of his treacherous and cruel wife, were upon him, and the Philistines prevailed. And merciless was the advantage they took of their success—putting out his eyes and binding him with fetters, and forcing him to grind in a prison-house.

22-31.—I know not if there be any natural connexion between the growth of the hair and the recovery of strength. Samson may have repented of his infidelity, and the temporal chastisement of his loss of strength been withdrawn. And this strength was made the instrument at the last of a great and signal manifestation—a triumph over idolatry—a vindication of the supremacy of the one only and true God—and, finally, a most picturesque and characteristic termination to the career of a great hero. One recoils from the barbarity of the Philistines in bringing in blind old Samson to make sport of him; and proportionally to this one feels a certain wild and natural satisfaction in the avenging ruin which he brought upon his enemies, even though himself involved in the common destruction that fell upon all—both men and women—who were enjoying the savage spectacle. Thus fell one of the most noted of the historical personages whom Scripture—so full of them—has transmitted downward to future ages.

JUDGES XVII.—This and the following chapter contain what may be termed an episode in this portion of Jewish history. It is strongly illustrative of what may be termed the demi-paganism of these times—proving how much the spirit of idolatry had tinged and corrupted the religion of the Hebrews. The mother cursed the person who had stolen her money; but when her son restored it, she withdrew her curses, and turned them into blessings. She had meant to dedicate it to a religious use; but Micah seemed unwilling to take it back again from her hand for the particular use of making images. He therefore left this application of it to her, though he afterwards fell

in with the idolatry; and by a farther liberty made one of his sons to officiate as the family priest—a liberty strongly indicative of the lawless state of a period when there was no effectual controlling authority, but each man did that which was right in his own eyes. It was the office of a king to enforce the laws against image-worship. The Levite of Beth-lehem-judah may have been of the family of Judah by his mother's side, and Micah was so far under the influence of his predilections in favour of the true religion, as to prefer him for a priest to his own son. The travelling of this Levite to find a place, evinces it to have been the practice in these times for families to take in Levites as household chaplains, and to give them a salary and a maintenance for their services. It was a very coarse way of turning a Levite into a priest, to have him consecrated by the hands of a layman. Yet so far did his preferences operate on the side of the original institution, that his imagination was appeased by this clumsy approximation to it.

Judges xviii. 1-10.—Contemporaneous with the incident of the last chapter is the recorded expedition of this on the part of the Danites, who had not yet got full possession of the land that was allotted to them. Things were yet in an unsettled state, and the want of a king would add to the restlessness and turbulence of that primitive condition of things. The Danite spies happened to know Micah's priest, who probably had been a wanderer, or sort of ecclesiastical mendicant, and got into converse with them in that way. There is a strange mixture of godliness in these men, though sadly tainted with the prevailing corruptions that had taken place; and perhaps

a similar mixture in the mind of the Levite who pretended to declare the mind of God—whether with or without his own convictions in the matter, is uncertain. There is an interesting picture given of the land which the spies visited—devoid alike of government and defence—yet living as free of care, and as full of the sense of security, as did the Zidonians, who were better entitled so to live, from the strength of their position and fortifications, but who were far from Laish, so as not to be in circumstances for readily yielding them any help. But the feature in the description of Laish which most attracts me is its state of seclusion, and withal of comfort and abundance—a place where there was no want of agricultural wealth, and with the sufficiency of which they were satisfied, without the commercial—having no business with any man—a representation, we believe, which holds true of many a large tract in the deep interior of many a country on the face of our world.

11-20.—I do not sympathize with this invasion of the Danites, and their attack on a people living in ease and security. The six hundred men had the spies along with them; who as they passed the house of Micah in Ephraim, gave information of the ecclesiastical things that were to be found there. It presents a curious medley of religion and religious feeling—thus to see a veneration and value for an ephod and teraphim, which formed part of their own Mosaic apparatus, mixed with a like veneration for the images of idolatry. There is a general religious affection which must have objects of some kind or other to rest upon; and in the selection of these objects they are here not very discriminating. But besides the things, they must have the priest also, who was glad of the

preferment held out to him; and so with this rude and ill-assorted assemblage of what had in their eyes a semblance and character of sacredness, they went on their way with satisfied consciences, and not at all disturbed, I fear, by any reflection on the theft by which they obtained the goods they so much rejoiced in.

21-31.—It was but a small proportion of the tribe of Dan who went on this expedition—perhaps only a generic family. (verse 19.) And they seem to have taken all that belonged to them, and particularly their little ones. (verse 21.) These they probably placed before for safety from pursuers behind, who soon came up—they consisting of Micah and his neighbours. They were not a match, however, for the Danites, who answered their remonstrances with threats, so that they were glad to turn back, leaving their plunderers to go off with the booty, and with the full benefit of the principle that might was right.... I am revolted by this inroad and massacre of a quiet and secure people. Nevertheless, if the original grant of Canaan to the Israelites gave them the warrant of a Divine commission and command for this enterprise—that sanctifies all and legalizes all. The farness from Zidon is alleged as a reason for there being no deliverer. This argues for an alliance of some sort between Zidon and Laish, which was in the extreme north-east of the Israelitish territory, and so, far from the sea-coast. The change of the name to Dan explains the phrase of from Dan to Beer-sheba as expressive of the whole length of the Holy Land. The seclusion of the place, which isolated the poor aboriginals from all ordinary business with other men, seems also to have isolated their successors for many generations from all ecclesiastical fellowship with the rest

of the Israelites. They set up an idolatry for themselves, and persevered in it for generations.

JUDGES XIX. 1-10.—Then follows another episode in the chronological history of this period, though—coming at the conclusion of the Book—it is presented in the form of an appendix. There seems nothing which can determine the time of the events here narrated. It was a period of great lawlessness and of the most rude and imperfect morality. This appears even at the outset of the story, though in a greatly aggravated character afterwards. It was not a wife, but a mistress which the Levite took to him, though he expected a fidelity which she failed in observing. She seems to have made an elopement to her father's house; and there seems to have been no great delicacy on either side, that is, on the part of the Levite's return to Beth-lehem-judah, or the father's reception of him. One might feel doubtful, however, as to the precise nature of the connexion, seeing that the Levite being called a son-in-law would look as if it were one of a legitimate sort. Still, at the same time, she is afterwards, in verse 9, called a concubine, so that we may conclude, on the whole, that matters were very carelessly and coarsely gone about in those days. After yielding for some time to the hospitable importunities of the father, the Levite at length took his departure along with his so-called concubine.... The note which tells us that Jebus is Jerusalem must either have come in afterwards as an explanatory clause, or argues that the history was written at a time considerably later than the event.

11-21.—Jebus must have been still occupied by the Canaanites; and it aggravates the misconduct of the men

of Gibeah to have so grossly misused the traveller, who turned in preference to their own city, on the principle of its being inhabited not by aliens, but by countrymen. They first evinced their inhospitableness by not taking in the strangers to their houses, till an old man, who felt an affinity towards them, as having come from Mount Ephraim, opened his house for their entertainment. The house of the Lord, whither the Levite said he was going, was at Shiloh. (Josh. xviii. 1.) One likes the generous and kind procedure of this honest old Ephraimite, which contrasts as strongly with that of the men of Gibeah as did the conduct of the good Samaritan in the parable with that of the priest and Levite to a wounded and helpless wayfarer. There is a surprising coincidence between what is here recorded and what we still read of the practice of travellers when they take up their night's quarters in towns.

22-30.—The horrible outrage narrated in these verses, gives a wretched view of the prostrate morality of these days. It is the old story of Sodom re-acted; nor does it detract from our wonder when we read of the offer made by the Ephraimite, and wherewith he attempted to turn the men of Gibeah from their base purpose. It is also most remarkable that when they insisted on their own atrocious indulgence in their own way of it, the Levite, to avert their design, should have given up his concubine into their hands. The history of that night is a truly revolting one, and marks the daring and desperate wickedness of these lawless and licentious ages. Yet let it be remarked that the narrator does not charge the general population of Gibeah with the guilt of this foul delinquency, but only certain sons of Belial amongst them—

though the whole city, nay, a whole tribe, by attempting to screen the offender, shared in the dread punishment that afterwards ensued.... The Levite certainly took a most impressive way of rousing the indignation of all Israel.

JUDGES XX. 1-11.—This great national movement proves how strongly the Israelites were bound together by a common and corporate tie; and also how readily the popular conscience still deferred to what was right, when once solemnized and called to the utterance of its verdict by circumstances fitted to arrest and awaken it. There was a great and general confluence from both sides of Jordan. Altogether it was a vast assemblage, brought together by a strong moral impulse, which says much for the heart of the people at large. There is something very impressive in the unity of principle and feeling that pervades a multitude knit together as one man. Perhaps the Levite over-coloured somewhat when he said that the men of Gibeah forced his concubine; though they may be said to have done so in that he was led by the terror of a still greater atrocity to bring her forth to them. The prompt and unanimous resolution which the people came to, marks the strength of the abhorrence felt by them all for the enormity which had been perpetrated in Israel.

12-18.—It does not follow from the refusal of the Benjamites, that collectively their moral sense was more obtuse than that of the Israelites generally; but other influences came into play. Their patriotic feelings were offended by the hostile demonstrations of the other tribes; and the pride of country and of kindred may have had a

large share in prompting their resistance to the demand that they should give up their own citizens into the hands of their now menacing adversaries. There was a fearful odds in point of numbers between the two opposing parties; and this aggravated to the uttermost, in that God was on the side of the majority;—for His counsel was asked, and it was given to the assembled children of Israel. He took charge of this painful warfare; and advised as to the details of it. And He kept the office of their counsellor and encourager throughout the progress of the war, to the time when He delivered the Benjamites into their hands —thereby giving terrible demonstration of Himself as loving righteousness and hating iniquity.

19-28.—It is often thus that God brings His ultimate designs to pass, not on the instant, but through a series of disappointments and reverses, whereby He exercises the faith and patience of His people. The Benjamites were both courageous and skilful men of war, insomuch that the hosts of Israel were defeated and fled twice before them. It is remarkable, that both the first and second defeat were immediately on the back of direct orders from Heaven that they should go up against Benjamin. The losses sustained, too, bore an immense proportion to the whole number of the single tribe that was opposed to them .... The people wept before the Lord when they again asked counsel of Him; and it is further indicative of a sense of guilt, which needed expiation ere they could succeed, that they after the second defeat offered burnt-offerings. The third time the direction to go up was accompanied by the promise of victory, and it had its fulfilment. It might approximate us to the chronology of this event, that Phinehas, the grandson of Aaron, was then living.

... Shiloh was on the borders of the tribe of Benjamin, where the ark of God was.

29-48.—It is worthy of being noted that this third trial, preceded by more of prayer and religious observance than the former, and withal made under the encouragement of an express promise, was also conducted with a greater amount of caution, and skill, and tactics. An ambush was laid; and the generalship and force of Israel prevailed—yet let us mark it well, it is said the Lord smote Benjamin before Israel.—Give us, O Lord, to proceed aright on the respective functions of the divine and the human agency.... The narrative given in brief in verse 35, is given more in detail afterwards. In the second statement of the numbers that fell of Benjamin, the one hundred of verse 35 is omitted. There is something to revolt and horrify in the expression of *gleaning* five thousand men in the highway. It is a cold-blooded description of what was done when the blood was hot and high in the fury of the conflict. It is awful to think what men are capable of; and how their passions and emotions fluctuate, and are borne resistlessly along on the tide of circumstances!

JUDGES XXI. 1-10.—The people now make exhibition of their characteristic fickleness. The work of fierce vengeance is followed up by the relentings of grief for the desolation which had thus been wrought in Israel.—Let us learn not to trust in the popular sentiment, so ready to pass from one extreme into another.... They gave vent to their sensibilities in prayer, and by sacrifices. Was it by an answer to these that they were led to their next work of slaughter? It is true that they were prompted thereto

by a strong religious sense of the obligation of a vow. And the men of Jabesh-gilead formed but a small proportion of the tribe to which they belonged—so that their extermination could not create the blank over which they mourned, in that a tribe was wellnigh cut off from Israel. And so they resolved on another tragedy, though on a smaller scale than before.

11-25.—Jabesh-gilead was beyond Jordan, and of the tribe of Gad. They proceeded against it in the fulfilment of their oath; and availed themselves of the opportunity which this expedition gave them to provide wives for the children of Benjamin. This brings to view the sweeping destruction which they had brought upon that tribe, in that they slaughtered all the women and children, (ch. xx. 48,) and they seem only to have fallen short of this in the case of Jabesh-gilead, by sparing the virgins for wives to the Benjamites. This they followed up by another act of violence, in order to make out a sufficient complement of wives for the whole remaining six hundred. This Shiloh rape is something like the Sabine rape. The elders took their own method of reconciling the fathers of these virgins, and appeasing their consciences, though now made over to the Benjamites, with whom they had sworn that they would form no intermarriage. The fathers did not give their daughters; the Benjamites took them—and there was no call, it was argued, to take them back again. It gives another view of the unwarrantable excess to which the Israelites had carried their vengeance, that they had not spared as many women as could have served the remnant of men for wives. This excuse would intimate that they were at liberty to do so, notwithstanding the oath which they had taken, and which itself was of a

very questionable character. On the whole, this story presents us with a dread exhibition of national energy, when conscience and religious faith have aught to do with its outbreakings. There is a strange mixture of religion and barbarity—two ingredients which now appear utterly incongruous—however often conjoined in these rude and rudimental stages of the Church.

RUTH.

September, 1843.

RUTH I. 1-14.—This beautiful and affecting story must have taken place a good way back in the era of the Judges, it being at the time of David's great-grandfather. The sons of Elimelech are called Ephrathites, simply because of Beth-lehem. These were two names for the same place. (Gen. xxxv. 19.) Micah, too, designates the town Beth-lehem Ephratah. (Micah, v. 2.) The family were compelled by famine to go to Moab, where they settled, and where the two sons, contrary to their own law, married out of Israel. All the men of this family died in the course of some years, and none but Naomi and the two daughters-in-law were left. The aged mother, with her Jewish predilections, determined to return to her original home, so soon as she heard that famine had ceased from the land. There is something deeply pathetic in the converse that took place between her and the two young widows, on her setting out for the land of Judah. She wishes them good husbands; but tells them that she had and would have no relatives through whom they might have children, in whose behalf the patrimonial inheritance could be redeemed. She acknowledges their kindness to her when in a land of strangers, and urges them to abide

in their own country. Orpah was prevailed upon, and returned to her people and their gods.

15-22.—But Ruth clave unto her; and even in the pages of Sterne, that great master of pathos, there is nothing which so calls forth the sensibilities of the reader as the simple effusion which he has borrowed from Scripture, of Ruth to her mother-in-law. Altogether it is a most exquisite composition, full of nature and truthfulness. One of the most effective clauses in this expression of Ruth's tenderness for Naomi is—"There will I be buried." This tenacious affection of the younger for the elder, is most happily and powerfully given forth. The recollection of Naomi had not vanished from the minds of the inhabitants of Beth-lehem, as is evinced by the sensation which her re-appearance there excited throughout the community. Naomi signifies fair or pleasant. Mara, sad or bitter. We cannot say that she reproaches the Almighty—for there seems to be an acknowledgment of her own deservings when she says—"The Lord hath testified against me."

Ruth II. 1-12.—A part of a field belonging to Boaz would seem to argue a great subdivision of land at that period.... Ruth does not appear to have had any other object than the mere kindness and indulgence which Boaz might show to her as a reaper, and this she accordingly experienced. One likes the salutation which passed between master and servant in these days. Boaz soon took special notice of Ruth; and on inquiring after her, did grant the favour which was probably all that she expected from his hands. He bade her keep by his maidens, and gave a charge to the young men, which of itself

proves the wrong and wayward freedoms that may have been current on harvest-fields in these times of rude and rough licentiousness. His telling her of this charge would embolden her all the more, and give her a sense of security when she went to drink of the water which they had drawn. It is pleasing to read of the testimony which her virtuous and affectionate conduct drew from the lips of Boaz. It is also to be noted that in coming from Moab to the land of Israel, he regarded her as having made deliberate choice of the God of Israel, under whose wings she now put her trust. Ruth does not seem to have known beforehand that she was gleaning in the field of Boaz, her mother-in-law's kinsman. It was her hap to light there. She gleaned where she was permitted, or where she found grace to be allowed this privilege. She acknowledges this grace in verse 10.

13-22.—The conversation between Ruth and Boaz proceeds apace, and is well fitted both to form and foster an affection between them. Ruth felt herself of a lower caste than even the other servants of Boaz, and so expresses it. One likes to read of the simple meals of these days. The supply of food for hunger formed the great staple of the kindness of that olden period. To let her glean among the sheaves, if she thought that she was unobserved, was sanctioning what we should feel a theft, but which perhaps in the rude morality then was not looked on as so culpable. What she is said to have left, in verse 14, she reserved for her mother, as in verse 18. The permission to glean which Boaz granted Ruth, extended to the whole of his harvest. She told Naomi that the charge was to keep fast by the young men—whereas, in verse 8, it is to keep fast by the maidens. If there be any error in Ruth's

narrative, it is rectified by Naomi, who tells her to go out with the maidens, and that she expose not herself to others at a distance from her female companions—a pretty distinct intimation of the rude liberties that were habitual then among the common people of Judea.

Ruth iii.—Naomi, who with a woman's wiles could spy the rise and progress of an affection that she wanted to improve for Ruth's comfort, said to her—Shall I not seek for thee a good settlement? and for this object lays down a procedure of her own devising. The whole affair looks very strange and questionable to us, although good Matthew Henry makes the most of it. It is not very clear how she could disguise herself so as to be unknown to Boaz till the end of the feast. The request of Ruth in verse 9, to which some would give an indelicate meaning, might be understood as a claim of marriage and consequent application for it. In Deuteronomy xxii. 30, and xxvii. 20, to take or have unlawful converse with one's father's wife is to uncover his father's skirt, that skirt the laying on of which implied marriage. Certain it is that a real matrimonial right, second only to the immediate one, was involved in this transaction; and we know not but that the whole proceeding may have consisted with the respectable usages of Jewish society. She left before there was so much light that one could identify another on meeting. On reporting what had happened to Naomi, she, with the sagacity of her age and sex, or as the Scotch would say, "like a gash old wife," saw how the matter was working, and assured her more inexperienced kinswoman that the man would not be at rest till he had finished the thing that very day.

Ruth iv. 1-12.—It turned out as the discerning old matron predicted. The man did not rest till he had finished the transaction; and for this went through all the legal and customary steps that were taken upon such occasions. The redeemer of Elimelech's land behoved to take the mortgage along with it. The nearest kinsman consented in the first instance; but when he heard of the consequent marriage which it inferred, he withdrew his consent. There are several ways of explaining the injury which this step might have brought upon his own inheritance. If he had had but one son by Ruth, he would have taken the name of Elimelech's family, and the name of his own been thereby obliterated. However this be, the obstacle to Boaz's marriage with Ruth was put out of the way, and the marriage took place accordingly with the cordial benedictions of all the people.... Ephratah may have been the territorial district of which Beth-lehem was the town.... Pharez was singular in that he was the only grandson of Jacob who gave birth to two generic families in Israel. Num. xxvi. 20.

13-22.—The traits given in this passage serve greatly to enhance the character of the book, as being a sweet picture of all that is tender and natural and domestic. The benediction of the women upon Naomi completes the character of this whole representation, and the affection of Naomi for the new-born child is quite of a piece with the manifold simple and beautiful touches by which this ancient and venerable record is adorned.

It heightens greatly the interest of this narrative that the people of whom it treats were in the lineage of David, or more impressive and solemnizing than this, of the lineage of Christ according to the flesh. How all the

distinctions both of nation and character are merged and confounded in His incarnation! He condescended to be the offspring of Ruth, a Moabitess; and, far more marvellous than this, He condescended to be the offspring of Tamar, whose son Pharez was the fruit of an incestuous connexion with her own father-in-law. Verily, He humbled Himself in assuming our nature! and it gives forth this lesson, that there is no degradation so sunken and low, no turpitude so utterly worthless and vile, as to be beyond the reach of His grace, or the possibility of being restored and elevated under the economy of His Mediatorship.

I. SAMUEL.

1 Samuel i. 1-18.—It appears from 1 Chron. vi. 33, 34, that Elkanah was a Levite. The Ephrathite admits of various significations, and may be attached either to Zuph or Elkanah. If to Elkanah, the likeliest explanation of it is that it signifies a dweller in Ephraim, though not an Ephraimite.... We see here the toleration of Hebrew polygamy. The conduct of Peninnah to her co-partner is revolting. She may have been actuated by jealousy of her husband's superior affection for Hannah. But besides this annoyance, children were more the objects of desire or ambition, and the want of them more felt as a disgrace in these days than now. And so to have a child was the object of Hannah's prayers and vows—her express preference being for a man-child.... Eli's suspicion of her would seem to argue that female drunkenness was not a rare thing, or, at least, not unexampled in that rude period. She seems to have received Eli's invocation as a prophecy—for her sadness was dissipated by it, as if she had con-

ceived from his saying the confident hope that her heart's wish would be granted. The importance of the approaching birth made it a fit and worthy subject for prophecy. ... To pour out one's soul before the Lord is a fine expression for large and full and desirous prayer.

19-28.—And the name which she gave her son implies that she considered him as specially granted to her request. And she was faithful to her vow of dedication, wherein she had the full consent of her husband. The word often means the deed, *verbum* for *res.* Let God perfect what he has begun. Let Him carry this matter to its satisfactory accomplishment. She at length took the child to Shiloh, with the purpose of leaving him there, and brought a costly offering along with her. It is of Samuel that it is said, in the concluding words of this chapter, how he worshipped the Lord there, that is, in Shiloh. He may even, when first weaned, have been taught to lisp his infant prayer; but whether the statement refers or not to any immediate act of devotion on his part, certain it is that he was left and made to abide there for that express and special service which marked his profession as one of the *religiosi.*

1 SAMUEL II. 1-10.—The expressions of Hannah are such as to savour richly of spiritual religion. Her Song, though much earlier than the Psalms, betokens an advance in such exercises beyond what we should have looked for at such an ancient stage of a dispensation confessedly ruder and grosser than that under which we now live. Joy in the Lord—joy in His salvation—the ascription to Him of unrivalled holiness, of creative power and greatness, of His guardianship over those who fear Him,

of such strength as will bear down all opposition, and of a judgment that reaches over the whole earth;—these are the conceptions, and couched too in adequate language of a pure and high theology, and might be adopted in the loftiest strains of the most enlightened devotion. One cannot help being struck with the resemblance between this hymn and that of Mary the mother of Jesus, as recorded by Luke. The meaning of Hannah's analogous expressions is the more palpable of the two, as bearing a reference to the taunts to which she had been exposed because of her childlessness at the hands of her adversary. We cannot, however, resist the impression of something typical and prospective as we read this beautiful effusion.

11-21.—The sons of Eli, as far as their haughty carriage to the people was concerned, resemble strongly what may sometimes be observed of the sons of popular ministers, presuming on their father's great acceptance and official dignity. But over and above this, Eli's children were disgraced by the grossest iniquities, all germinating from the root of ungodliness—for "they knew not the Lord." They violently and unjustly trenched on the people's part, and they profanely trenched on God's part in the sacrifices that were offered. This was a conduct which scandalized all men; and ministers incur a grievous responsibility who thus make the service of the sanctuary a contempt and abhorrence to men.... The family of Elkanah present a beautiful spectacle to the eye of the reader, their parents coming up yearly to Shiloh, and the mother bringing each time a coat for her little son. The blessing of Eli upon them seems to have had the same prophetic virtue as on a former occasion. His invocation for an

increase to Hannah's offspring took effect in four or five additional births; and meanwhile Samuel grew apace.

October, 1843.

22-36.—What a lesson to parents is here! Eli was a good and indulgent old man; but he ought to have held the reins both of his parental and official authority with a firmer hand, and put down, though even at the expense of deprivation or severe punishment to his sons, their foul enormities. There was truth in the remonstrance of the man of God, that he honoured his sons above God.... Eli is said to have been of the family of Ithamar, to which the priesthood was transferred from that of Eleazar; and the cutting off of the arm of his house, seems to have been effected by the re-transference of the priesthood to the family of Eleazar—as in the cases of Abiathar and Zadok, who were descendants from that son of Aaron. His seeing "an enemy in my habitation," might signify his seeing a successful rival for the office of High Priest taken from another family than his own—even as Zadok was by the appointment of David. (2 Sam. xv. 35; 1 Chron. xxiv. 3.) Zadok may be said to have stood before Solomon in 1 Chron. xxix. 22. Many think, however, that instead of the High Priest standing before kings, what is here signified is, that he should stand before his great Antitype in the heavens, even Christ the Lord.... It is quite conceivable that the outcast family may have been reduced to the straits spoken of in verse 36.... How like what is said of Samuel, in verse 26, is to what is said of Christ in Luke ii. 52.

1 SAMUEL III. 1-14.—The word of the Lord was scarce in these days, there being no prophet known openly, and

as such to all, and whom all might consult—an intimation to us of the way in which the supernatural intercourse between Heaven and earth was then carried on, that is, by inspired men.... This passage comes home to me with all the interest which attaches to boyish recollections—it having formed one of the Sacred Dialogues, a school-book.... There must have been certain marks which authenticated the converse that God held with man in these days, and by which Samuel and others were led to know when it was that the Lord spake to them. Eli knew; and he may have been the subject in a limited way of such messages from above, though not so frequently or so patently as that through him there could be said to be any open vision. Eli prepared Samuel for the reception of a message which told most fearfully and fatally on the old man himself, and in such a way as to hold forth an impressive warning to parents when they restrain not their families from evil.... The house of Eli was never to be so purged with sacrifice as to be recalled from their outcast state, and re-admitted as before to the priesthood.

15-21.—The communication to Eli of what the Lord had said, must have been painful to Samuel; and it was Eli's consciousness of this that made him urge for a disclosure. Eli had obviously good points and feeling about him—though these were counteracted by the infirmity of a facile acquiescence in the wickedness of his family. Yet his expression of resignation to the will of God was the result of a right sensibility. A great deal might be made of the character of Eli, who is altogether worthy of a place in Scripture biography.... "The Lord was with him" is applied to Joseph, I think, as well as Samuel—perhaps to others. He "let none of his words fall to the

ground," or verified and made good all that he uttered as a prophet. And so all Israel knew that he was a prophet indeed. The thing was patent to all the people—a good explanation, by the way, of that open vision, (verse 1,) which they were in want of before the days of Samuel. This want was made up in him. He resided in Shiloh; and there the people repaired as to an oracle, that they might know what the revelations were which were made to Samuel by the word of the Lord.

1 Samuel iv. 1-9.—The effect of the open vision was that the word of the Lord through Samuel came to all Israel. It does not appear, however, that he sanctioned the present warlike movement against the Philistines. Perhaps the first clause of verse 1 should have formed the termination of the preceding chapter, as being more directly connected with its last three verses. Neither does it appear that he counselled the taking of the ark out of Shiloh into the camp. Eli gave way to the clamorous demand for it on the part of the elders .... It is interesting to notice the sensation it produced among the Philistines, and the strong traditional impression which they had of the power of the God of Israel from the historical doings of several centuries back. The fear and the patriotism were in strong conflict with each other; but the latter did prevail, and braced them for the contest.

10-22.—Thus was fulfilled the denunciation of God by Samuel on the family of Eli. But they did not fall alone; for thirty thousand of the Israelites fell along with them—so extensive is the ruin which the wickedness of the few might bring upon the many. It is obvious of Eli, that, with all his weakness and infirmity of purpose, he had

strong religious sensibilities. His heart trembled for the ark of God; and the tidings of its capture by the Philistines proved to him the knell of death. He could stand all the rest of the disaster, including the death of his own children; but he could not stand this. One cannot help the feeling of a compassionate interest in the good old man; but how impressive a lesson is here held out on the importance of family discipline, and the firm while righteous exercise of parental authority. After his death, the fulfilment of the family doom is carried forward in the death of his daughter-in-law; and the name she gives to her son has been transmitted as one of proverbial force and import to the present day, to express the departed glory of a house or a Church or a nation .... How readily we sympathize with the wounded and scandalized feelings of the Israelites on the ark of God having been taken!

1 Samuel v.—It is thus that God left not himself without a witness, even to the idolatrous nation of the Philistines; and we cannot tell how far this may have kept alive the notion of a supreme and only true God in the midst of them. Certain it is, that His doings in Egypt did spread a sense of Him amongst many people, and which lasted for centuries .... There is great diversity of opinion about these emerods—some supposing them ulcers and many other things. Compare verse 9 with Psalm lxxviii. 66. It was well that the Philistines recognised the hand which this infliction came from .... The carrying about of the ark had the effect of spreading more extensively among the heathen the recognition and dread of the true God .... It is likely that the destruction which took place at Gath was different from the visitation of the

emerods, for that was a deadly destruction; but the emerods do not seem to have been deadly.

1 Samuel vi. 1-9.—There is something very revolting in the trespass-offering of these Philistines. The conjunction of the emerods with mice would countenance the idea of the former being animals as the latter. The mice, it would appear, formed part of the one plague that was on them all—probably an Egyptian visitation of them in such numbers as to injure the country. Their sending a trespass-offering at all, was the recognition of God as a God that was to be feared. It was like an acceptance of their punishment at his hands—seeing that the punishment was shadowed forth in the offering, and it was also recommended by their priests as a test from which they could discover (verse 3) whether it was indeed from the hand of the God of Israel that they had suffered.... It is interesting to mark the lesson which they took from the hardening of the heart of Pharaoh. Is it possible that this could have floated down for centuries on the current of a mere oral tradition? And is it not rather a proof that the matter had been transmitted in a written record—a sort of collateral evidence for the existence at that time of the Pentateuch?... The employment of two milch-kine which had never been yoked before, was expressive of their homage for the sacred burden now to be laid upon them. It is very remarkable, however, that their priests should determine the test by which to ascertain that their plagues had come from the God of Heaven.

10-21.—And what the priests of the Philistines made the test was verified—which gave them the semblance of being priests and prophets indeed; but even at this expense

did the true God make demonstration of Himself to these heathen; and it is impossible to know how much the cause of a sound Theism was indebted to such manifestations connected with God's own peculiar people.... The stone remained down to the writing of this book. The expression "unto this day," generally denotes that the narrative was penned a considerable time after the event which it records. ... There must have been only five mice, according to the number of lordships over the cities, and not according to the number of cities themselves.... There are various devices put forth for reducing the numbers of the slain at Beth-shemesh—as for one example, that there were seventy men slain, being in the ratio of fifty out of every thousand, or a twentieth part of the whole. It was at least a terrible demonstration of God's holiness, and hatred of all that could profane it. No wonder that they longed to get rid of the ark, and that instead of taking it away themselves, they sent for the people of a neighbouring city to fetch it!

1 SAMUEL VII.—I do not see how the men of Kirjath-jearim could do aught but *set apart* Eleazar to keep the ark; and this is the original meaning of "sanctify." There seems to have been a lack of countenance from Heaven at this time.

But Samuel at length came forward in the character of a Seer.—O let me prepare my heart and then serve!... They do not seem to have been very observant of their own rubric in these days. I am not aware of its being prescribed that water should be poured out before the Lord, though there be examples of this. At all events, the Lord accepted and honoured Samuel to be at the head of a great deliverance for the children of Israel.... There is

here another memorable word—Eben-ezer—which is used to this day for the expression of God's helping and preserving care .... There is something of patriarchal dignity in Samuel, which is quite in keeping with his high vocation. These circuits he made in his judicial capacity must have tended much to make him the personal acquaintance of the people of Israel.

1 SAMUEL VIII. 1-9.—There must have been great power vested in Samuel, that he could thus appoint his own successors in place and authority—apart, too, from their qualifications, for they were men of corrupt character.—Preserve me, O God, from lucre! ... One should like to know what it was that displeased Samuel in the request of the Israelites for a king. Did the setting aside of his own sons form an ingredient of it? However, the Lord hearkened to his prayer. One could understand how God should have been offended, had the Israelites meant to supersede Samuel; but they at least professed that they meant only to supersede his sons. Did God sanction the appointment of these sons, even as he sanctioned Samuel? Samuel clearly held his office *de jure divino*—whereas the proposed king, apart from the pleasure of God, would have only held his by the *vox populi*, a clear case here where *vox populi* was not *vox Dei*. It is obvious that, though we are far from having a full account of the character of this transaction, they did reject God in not waiting for His future appointment, and in attempting to set aside Samuel, His chosen ruler, by a ruler of their own prescribing.

10-22.—Accordingly, God put a message of displeasure into the mouth of Samuel. He tells them what the character should be of that regimen which they longed for—

very different, truly, from the paternal sway of Samuel himself! Besides the oppressions which they should suffer, he makes known to them that their present application was against the will of God—so that their refusal to hear Samuel now resolved itself into direct impiety.... The principle on which they desired a king was that which, given way to, led to all the abominations of the surrounding idolatry and wickedness—" that we also may be like all the nations." They wanted him also to usurp the functions of Samuel—that " he may judge us." They were at length filled with the fruit of their own way. They were bent upon getting their will, and they got it in displeasure, but afterwards paid the penalty.

1 SAMUEL IX. 1-13.—There now comes a noted transition in the history of the Israelites—from the government of Judges to that of Kings. The qualification of Saul seems to have been a very popular one, and calculated to be so in these days—a personable man, and of goodly size and appearance.... We have here a lesson of Providence as extending to the minutest events and movements which take place below.... It would seem that the prophets in these days had their perquisites. The office was frequent throughout Israel, and long kept up, as we may learn from the very way in which the change of their title is announced to us. This reference to the former name of a prophet, now fallen into disuse, is a proof of the book being written long posterior to the event, unless verse 9 be an interpolation explanatory of the change of name that had taken place, and with a view to elucidate the meaning of the author.... The motions of Samuel were all known to the population of this place; and we have tokens

here both of his great publicity and of the reverence in which he was held.

14-27.—Samuel was prepared for Saul by word from Heaven.... The narrative gives an insight into some of the peculiarities of the time. Samuel indulged in a large hospitality, and kept a table for many guests. And, as with Joseph, the guests who were most honoured were signalized by the best or largest dishes being set before them. "That which is left" is at least more intelligently translated by "that which is reserved." One does not well see the meaning of the point of admiration subjoined to this in many of the Bibles.... Saul must have had some notice of a great preferment being intended for him, from Samuel's first address to him, general though it was. His preternatural knowledge of what had befallen the asses and of their being now found, must have confirmed Saul's reliance on Samuel as a prophet, and prepared him all the better for receiving what Samuel laid before him, as the word of God.

1 Samuel x. 1-16.—There is a sacredness attached to the person of him who is the Lord's anointed—a sacredness of which kings have gladly availed themselves, and which had a clear foundation on truth in the case of Saul. Samuel makes further discovery, in this passage, of his supernatural acquaintance with things beyond ordinary reach—the same in kind with that evinced when our Saviour bade his disciples to fetch him an ass and the colt of an ass. There must have been a place of worship at Beth-el. The multitude and minuteness of the signs given forth by Samuel would, when fulfilled, accumulate a resistless weight of evidence upon his person; but the

most impressive of these is the experimental or personal one, and such as in kind might be verified by converts to Christianity in the present day.—O give me the token of my acceptance, by giving me, O Lord, another heart! . . . It was a most natural result of the visitation which came upon Saul, that the consequent proverb should have come out of it. The question of "Who is their father?" has had different bearings assigned to it. It appears like an unsuccessful fetch by the interrogator at the origin of this gift of prophecy, leaving the wonder still unabated that Saul should have been one of the family. It is not distinctly told how this art of prophesying was manifested: probably after the exercise of prophesying was finished, he went to the high place to worship.... He felt it not prudent as yet to make promulgation of what Samuel had done to him.

17-27.—Samuel charges them with a rejection of God's appointment, and the superseding of it by an appointment of their own. There seems to be no drawing back on their part in virtue of this remonstrance; so that they cannot be said to have sinned without warning, or in ignorance. As God Himself saved them, God Himself might well have had the settlement of a ruler over them. He seems to have subjected the people of Israel to lot, and upon its successive trials to have centred the determination upon individual Saul.... Was this concealment of himself an affected modesty, or a real nervous repugnance, on the part of Saul? We read in history of a pretended reluctance on the part even of usurpers of a monarchy.... Saul's appearance engaged the liking of the multitude; and Samuel, by writing the "manner of the kingdom" in a book, seems to have furnished the people with the scheme of a

monarchical constitution. Saul obtained the attendance of men whom God seems to have actuated by a divine principle of loyalty; and he began wisely and well, in abstaining from all resentful notice of those who had insulted him. We have here a manifest exemplification of the Divine testimony in favour of loyalty: They whom God had touched followed Saul—they who reviled him are called children of Belial.

1 SAMUEL XI.—This is the second great occasion on which Jabesh-gilead was celebrated in Jewish history. They at one time experienced a great destruction, but now a deliverance, at the hands of their countrymen.... Saul, actuated by God's Spirit, evinced a proper indignancy of soul at the tidings of their danger. In the message he sent to Israel he places himself before Samuel, as if the civil ranked before the ecclesiastical, even in these days. The threat which accompanied the message—a message couched in action as well as words—was a threat not against the people but against their oxen: They would lose their cattle if they did not obey his summons. It called forth a great assemblage. The message of verse 10 was from the men of Jabesh-gilead to their enemies, the Ammonites.... Saul behaved nobly on this occasion, and more particularly in the forbearance that he manifested towards those who had reviled him, and whom his people wanted to make a sacrifice of. This transaction would serve greatly to strengthen Saul in his kingdom, which was ratified anew to him by popular consent at Gilgal.

1 SAMUEL XII. 1-11.—Samuel again comes forth with an address to all Israel. It is remarkable that he should

speak of his sons. Perhaps he speaks of them in contrast with the king, as forming part of the people, as not being distinguished from themselves, and no longer standing in the way of their own choice. He speaks as one who had resigned not only a government but a dynasty, and then challenges their scrutiny into the whole of his administration. Or he may have made over first his sons to their judgment if they so chose, and then calls for their judgment on himself. On this he received their full sentence of acquittal—after which he delivers a solemn warning and admonition in their hearing. It is delightful to mark how thoroughly he incorporated the remembrance of their old history with all such addresses—thus identifying the nation now with the nation of centuries back, and making it of a piece through all its progressive stages. It is a rapid sketch which he gives of their ancient annals downward from Jacob, through their deliverers and judges; but all serving to establish the one lesson—that the unseen God was the prime Agent and Mover in all their vicissitudes; and that just as they pleased or displeased Him, were they in circumstances either of safety or affliction.

12-25.—He then comes down to their own day and doings, and lets us in both to the reason of the Israelites' desire for a king and to its sinfulness: They thought that it would strengthen them against such incursions as those of the Ammonites, who were headed by a king; but then it implied a distrust of God, and was in fact a quarrelling with His given ordinance. It is a remarkable forth-putting of the popular will, when set as theirs was on a monarchical government. It was most indulgent in God not to cast them off at this juncture, but to assure them

of his continued protection, if they would but be obedient now. It was a signal miracle that Samuel held forth to the senses of the people; and no wonder that it made a great impression. One would like to know from observation whether thunder at the time of wheat harvest be still a rarity in Palestine.... It is altogether a striking instance of the forbearance of God, that after the great offence the people had committed, they should still have the season of grace thus lengthened out to them, and continue the subjects of God's paternal government and care. It is a noble and affecting address, and concludes with a forcible appeal to the consciences of the people on the ground of the great things which God had done for them, and their consequent obligation to serve and to obey Him.

1 Samuel xiii. 1-10.—There is here introduced for the first time one of the most attractive and interesting of our Scriptural personages—even Saul's son Jonathan. He appears first as a warrior, but afterwards in the light of a faithful and affectionate friend—contrasting most advantageously with the harsh and repulsive character of his father—who after a most promising outset, soon begins to show himself.... Saul proclaimed his will with authority—calling together the people who had chosen him, and whose confidence in him was probably still unshaken. But it was a confidence which soon gave way on the approach and appearance of danger: The Philistines were in sight and in great force, and fear took hold upon Israel. Saul on this occasion made the first exhibition of his rashness and waywardness in—himself of the tribe of Benjamin—putting forth his hand to sacrifice; an office which

exclusively belonged to those of the tribe of Levi. This he did in the absence of Samuel.

11-23.—Samuel here rebukes Saul for the first of his recorded errors, and Saul in his reply obliquely blames Samuel for being behind his appointment. He had committed the sin of Uzziah, by intruding on the priest's office, and perhaps was held to have aggravated his sin by acting without taking counsel of Samuel—which was equivalent to not asking counsel of God. Samuel, therefore, gave him intimation of the fall of his house, and of God having found a successor to his throne.... The evidence is here given of the state of oppression in which Israel was held by the Philistines. They were thus most inadequately and miserably reduced in number, probably from the knowledge that Samuel had left Saul in displeasure. Their state was like that which Deborah recorded in her Song. (Judges v. 8.) Saul and Jonathan, however, were allowed to wear armour; so that there was some sort of measure or limit to the oppressions of the Philistines.

1 Samuel xiv. 1-10.—It would seem as if the whole curse had not been immediately fulfilled—seeing that the ephod was still worn by one of his family. There is a difficulty started in that, from chapter xxii. 9, it is said to be Ahimelech and not Ahiah the son of Ahitub who was High Priest. There are various methods of resolving this difficulty.... My recollection of Robinson is, that these sharp rocks can be still identified; and if so, it forms a most interesting monumental evidence of the truth of the history.... Jonathan must in so far have been endowed with the prophetic spirit, that he specifies a test by which

positively to ascertain beforehand whether his expedition was to be successful or not. There was great piety and confidence in God, at all events, manifested by him. This sort of conditional prophecy carries in it a twofold indication of the Divinity—in that He first brings about the condition, and then makes good its implied result.

11-20.—The Israelites must have been in a state of great prostration and terror when they thus hid themselves from the Philistines.... The sign took place which Jonathan had before fixed on—a proof of one Divine interposition; and the thing signified took place—the proof of another. The Philistines were paralyzed, doubtless by a preternatural visitation from above. This appears even at the first onset; and still more when the host was terror-struck and so blinded with fear as to beat down each other. The earthquake, no doubt, helped this confusion, which at length became visible to Saul and his followers. Saul's inquiry had proceeded on the idea that this might have been the work of a detachment from his own people; but he found that only two of them were absent. He seems to have set himself to ask counsel of God through the priest, but afterwards bade him desist —" Withdraw thine hand." What he saw prompted him to immediate action, without waiting for the issue of what the priest's inquiries at the Lord might have been.

21-31.—This reverse to the Philistines turned the Israelites who were with them, and brought the rest out of their hiding-places to join in the pursuit of the flying enemy. But Saul again comes forth with his characteristic frowardness, and in most, if not all of the instances, there is something like a religious feeling, or at least a sense of and respect for supernatural agencies and things,

which forms the impellent principle. Formerly it was a rash sacrifice, and now it is a rash vow, by which he had like to have spoiled all. By the former he incurred the displeasure of Samuel, and by the latter the resistance of all the people; not that they resisted on their own account—for they religiously abstained from the indulgence of their own appetite, and at the expense, too, of much suffering. Jonathan's remonstrance was founded on truth: The victory might have been much more complete, but for this unfortunate perversity of Saul.... By the way, we have here a specimen of the land flowing with honey. One would like to know how it is with Palestine in this respect in the present day.

32-46.—Still may we perceive in most of Saul's characteristic motions or aberrations a certain religiousness—as at present, when he was visited with a sensibility because of the people eating blood. Perhaps the stone on which he ordered the beasts to be slain for food may have been converted or enlarged by him into an altar. There was in him a certain disposition towards God, however rudely and blindly, and withal impetuously, he gave way to his sudden and strong impulses. And yet he was for hurrying on to the Philistines, and probably would have done it instantly but for the interposition of the priest, who probably sought to repair the interruption of verse 19. On this he did ask counsel of God, but got no answer, from which he inferred that there was sin in the camp, which fell by lot upon Jonathan, who would have fallen a victim to the zeal and indiscretion of his father, had he not been rescued by the people. The Israelites, let it be remarked, gave implicit obedience to the king in all that related to themselves—as in abstaining from food and in complying with

Saul's desire about the slaughter of their animals; but they refused giving way to him in the affair of Jonathan.... The Philistines got all the easier off because of Saul's blunders.

47-52.—Saul seems, on the whole, to have been a successful warrior, save at the last, though he does not seem to have subdued but only to have vexed his enemies—yet so as at least to deliver Israel out of the hands of their spoilers. He seems to have studied war, and made the preparations for it very much the business of his reign. We can here see the executive energy that accompanies the monarchical form of government—Saul by his single authority doing more for the formation of a strong and well-appointed army than was done in the former loose and democratic state of Israel.

There was sore war between Saul and the Philistines all his days; but since the last great dispersion of the latter there seems to have been no subjugation on either side.... Abner was Saul's cousin.

1 Samuel xv. 1-9.—Samuel had not been suffered yet to break conclusively with Saul, and so again meets him with a commission from God.... There is here another striking example of the sins of a remote parentage being visited on their distant posterity. It was because of what the Amalekites did centuries before that sentence of extermination was to be executed on their descendants—the moral thus going beyond the personal identity, and quadrating with a nation or the offspring of a far-back progenitor. The Amalekites were on the southern parts of Judea. The Kenites, again, were the descendants of Jethro, and they met with a reverse treatment from the Amalekites—having the kindness of their equally far-back

ancestors imputed to them, and they were dealt with accordingly. Saul again fell into one of his wayward perversities; but it could scarcely at this time be denominated a blunder—he having spared not only Agag the king, but the best of the cattle—though expressly enjoined by Samuel from the Lord to spare none of them.

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10-23.—This is the first direct expression of the Divine displeasure against Saul. When God says He is grieved or repents, let us not so explain away, on the principle of accommodation, as to dilute the effect of the expression understood in a natural way. The provocation given at this time was, that he made not the entire destruction among the Amalekites which he was commanded to do. Samuel was mightily concerned at this announcement.... The place which Saul set up at Carmel is conjectured to have been a triumphal arch or some monument of victory. He was a strangely blind and withal wilful person, saying that he had performed the commandment of the Lord, when he had directly violated it. Samuel makes instant appeal to the proofs of his disobedience. His pretence for saving the oxen and sheep was that he might make a sacrifice unto the Lord—still going perversely astray on the subject of religion—traversing the will of God by his own will, or what may be termed his own will-worship. Samuel's impressive rebuke was grounded upon this delinquency; and in the course of it he deals forth this pure Theism of later prophets—that "to obey is better than sacrifice".... "Rebellion is as witchcraft," means, that it is as bad to set up one's own will against the will of the true God as to set up false gods.

24-35.—Saul gave way to this denunciation of Samuel

—yet would put off the blame from himself to the people. Samuel, however, could not recall the doom that he had pronounced on the king—that is, the disseveration of the kingdom from him and from his family. Saul was visited with a temporary contrition, and prevailing on Samuel to turn back, worshipped the Lord in his presence. Saul betrays the motive of his urgency with Samuel, which was not purely a religious one—but that he might not be disgraced among his dignitaries by Samuel going off from him in displeasure. Samuel held the sacrifice of Agag indispensable to the real worship of God in the circumstances. Some think that Agag came tremblingly, others haughtily. One can enter into the sentiment, "that the bitterness of death is past," as uttered by one who had made up his mind to die.

There is something affecting in this conclusive separation between Samuel and Saul, and in the disappointment and grief of the old prophet. In one sense the Lord does not repent, as in verse 29; and in another he does repent, as in verse 35.—Let me not attempt a wisdom beyond what is written.

1 Samuel xvi. 1-13.—This passage introduces to our notice a most celebrated Scriptural personage. But let me first remark the sanction given here by God to the concealment of our real purpose, when the knowledge of it might expose to danger. The sacrifice to the Lord was a blind to the actual errand on which Samuel came to Bethlehem—the birth-place of David as well as of David's Son. The trembling of the elders at his approach, marks the reverence in which he was held, and the impression they had of his sacredness and power.... We have here a

weighty sentiment given in connexion with the setting aside of Eliab. The Lord, it is said, looketh on the heart, and David was the man according to His own heart. He was accordingly the Lord's anointed—the one upon whose head Samuel poured the horn of oil at a bidding from on high. There was no popular call in this instance. He was clearly and emphatically a king *jure divino;* and from this day the Spirit of the Lord came upon David.

14-23.—Saul was abandoned by the influences of God's Spirit. Some of these are ordinary; but we have reason to believe that in those days of a more special Theocracy the rulers of this one people were guided by Him in a way more marked and that bordered on the miraculous. However this be, the Spirit of God was succeeded by an evil spirit, whose instigations were calmed and allayed by the power of music—the very sensibility to which we are apt to conceive is allied to something good. There was a special providence in the circumstances which brought Saul and David together.... The power of David's harp on the troubled spirit of Saul supplies me with an illustration which I need not state here, but on which I have fully expatiated in my Lectures on the Romans.

1 Samuel xvii. 1-11.—We are presented in this chapter with one of the most notable of our Scripture stories. The Israelites were now enabled to make head against the Philistines, but were far from having obtained the mastery over them. The two belligerent nations were in a sort of balancing and alternate state—though now matters looked adversely and menacingly for Israel, who quailed under the vaunting of Goliath, the great champion of the Philistines. His challenge sent terror into their hosts; and his

appearance, we have no doubt, would greatly enhance their feelings of alarm.... Let it be remarked, that Palestine still bears the evidence of such heights with deep ravines between them as made it practicable for hostile parties to hold such parley with each other, as we read of more than once in the Old Testament Scriptures. This I had from Mr. Bonar, who formed one of the Assembly's Mission to the Holy Land.... And so Saul and his people heard the words of the Philistine, and were dismayed.

12-19.—The hand of a special providence is again to be seen in these fresh developments of the history of David. It is well to compare Scripture with Scripture, to get the information completed of any one subject by the re-assembling of all its particulars—seeing that some may occur in one passage which had been omitted in another. Jesse was introduced before, but we are here told for the first time that he was counted an old man in the days of Saul. Perhaps this may be noticed here to explain why Jesse was not called out to the wars too by king Saul. The paternal feeling on his part, which prompted the errand on which he sent David to visit his brethren in the army, quadrated in time with the demonstrations that were making by Goliath; and this affords an experimental illustration of the entireness and universality of the Divine government—as blending the minute with the momentous, and so ruling over all history.

20-30.—David, on being made to understand the boastful challenge of Goliath, was moved with indignation, and felt in himself the stirrings of a warrantable confidence urging him onward to an acceptance of the challenge. It is not said, as upon many analogous occasions, that the Spirit of the Lord visited him; but who can doubt that

He inspired him with the energy and the faith which now actuated his bosom? The resentful feeling and disdain of his eldest brother towards him are strikingly of a piece with what is recorded of Joseph's brethren in the Old, and of the brethren or human relatives of Christ in the New Testament—in all which cases the purposes of God ran counter to the feelings and imaginations of men. David's reply met the accusation of Eliab, that he had come merely to see the battle. He intimates another cause, one palpable to Eliab himself—sent by his father with provisions for his brethren; and perhaps another, only felt by himself—the conscious awakening of an internal call to join combat with Goliath, and perhaps a consequent purpose to do so.

31-47.—The courage and determination of David bear every appearance of having been inspired, and his anticipations of success have the character of prophecies—though grounded in part on the recollection of his past experience. There is something very animating in the expression of his confidence—"The Lord that delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine".... There is something most strikingly outlandish in the cursing of David by Goliath, and that by his gods.... The serenity and simple preparations of David are most admirably set forth; as well as the elevated piety and confident predictions of the youthful combatant. It was a noble manifestation of faith in God, and met with a corresponding triumph.

48-58.—The simple attire and furniture of David for this combat, add very much to the interest of its narrative. "He prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and a

stone." The Lord was on his side, and he feared not what man could do unto him.

The circumstance of Saul inquiring at David of himself and his family, when some time before he had been one of his household, presents a difficulty which has met with various solutions. I can vouch for the likelihood of one of them—the natural forgetfulness of one who is exposed to many faces, and is much distracted with public business; and Saul may have had a considerable time to forget David—for we know not how long the interval was between David's last leaving him and his present interview. Besides, David may have grown, and so been changed in appearance, and also in his garments from a court to a shepherd's dress.

1 SAMUEL XVIII. 1-9.—Jonathan seems to have been present at this interview between Saul and David, and to have been suddenly caught by that affection which forms one of the most beautiful traits in Scripture history, and gives a most singularly attractive hue to the character of Jonathan—as generous as he was alive to friendship and to all the finer sensibilities of the soul. And it is well, too, to treasure up the characteristics of David—who among all the human personages described in the Bible, shines as a star of the first magnitude. We have here presented, first his obedient loyalty to the monarch, then the wisdom of his conduct, then those popular and engaging qualities which made him a favourite both in the household of Saul and among all the people. And he was soon called upon to act a very difficult part, and placed in such circumstances of danger and perplexity as made it necessary for him to draw upon all his resources. His

popularity brought him to the brink of ruin—awakening, as it did, that jealousy in Saul's dark and distempered bosom which proved the cause of many of those sore trials and vicissitudes which the future king of Israel had to undergo in the school of his wisely-ordered discipline.

10-17.—And this jealousy of Saul soon forced an outbreaking. The evil spirit returned to him, and David resumed his former services as a harper to charm it away. It was then that we read of Saul's first act of direct violence against him. David made his escape, and Saul fell on other devices for making away with him. He saw that God was on his side, and was quite conscious that He had departed from himself. Perhaps he felt the relinquishment of that Spirit which he had from God formerly, and its replacement by another spirit, or the workings, it may be, of his own evil spirit when left to himself. David, meanwhile, conducted himself wisely—with the wisdom, doubtless, that was from above—which made Saul all the more afraid of him. David's popularity, however, grew apace, and put Saul on his machinations to get rid of him. His first expedient was to promise him one of his daughters on the condition of his earning so great a preferment by some warlike achievement—and this in the hope that he would fall by his enemies.

18-30.—David was humble as well as courageous and wise, and therefore professes, and I doubt not truly, his feeling, that he was not worthy of such a preferment. He was disappointed, however, in the first daughter, probably by the faithlessness of Saul, who was pleased to hear of the other's affection to him, that with her he might again attempt the same policy—a proof of the inveteracy of his hostile feeling, that he could scheme the

destruction of David though at the expense of inflicting a blow on his own child. It seems somewhat in the form of an apology for his not having got Merab, that Saul says to David that he should at least have one of the twain. But ere he should have her, a dangerous exposure was proposed to him by the craft and cruelty of the king. There was no inconsistency between David's pleasure in being the king's son-in-law, and his sense of its being an honour that was too great for him.... The princes of the Philistines put themselves in motion for another war, and the wise generalship of David, while it gained for him the confidence and esteem of the people, made him still more an object of disquietude and dislike to Saul's troubled spirit.

1 SAMUEL XIX. 1-10.—The state of matters between Saul and David, gave rise to what may be called an intense family politics—in the busy operation of which Jonathan's affection for him was a main element, whose friendship and fidelity have earned for him an imperishable name.... It is likely that Jonathan's remonstrance with his father had for the time a right and genuine effect upon him. It was probably a sincere oath, for he seems to have been susceptible of strong and honest impressions for the present, however momentary, or liable to be displaced by other and opposite impressions. He "hearkened unto the voice of Jonathan"—signifying that what he heard he heard with acquiescence. There was thus a temporary reconciliation effected, soon however to be broken up—for, revisited by his evil spirit, Saul again made a violent attempt on the life of David, who again and as before made his escape from it.

11-24.—Saul's vengeance now assumed a more aggressive

character—going forth as he did in quest of his victim. But Michal, whose affection was still unabated, devised effectually for the protection of her husband. It proves how exceedingly set Saul was on the destruction of David, and not only so, but how much he would have enjoyed the sight of its infliction upon him, that he would have had him brought to him on his sick-bed to be slain with his own hand .... It is very interesting thus to be brought again into contact with old Samuel, and to read of the personal converse and association together of two such gigantic men as him and David. Samuel does not seem to have abided in his place upon the visit of David—for both, it is said, went to dwell at Naioth. The messengers whom Saul sent, overpowered by the sacredness of the place and people they came to, and visited by the Spirit of God, joined in the exercises of the holy men whom they found there; and even Saul himself was visited in like manner, and throwing off his royal robes, lay as it were in a trance, during which it is probable that David made his escape from him. This was the way in which God chose to protect "the man according to His own heart."

1 Samuel xx. 1-10.—It was not safe for David to remain longer near Saul, for that after the fit, as it may perhaps be rightly called in reference to him, of prophecy was over, there was the utmost likelihood of this being succeeded by the feelings of his old and distempered nature. David found his way to Jonathan, and they had an earnest and affecting interview .... There was probably a public feast given at new-moon, when all the principal officers of the court and household were expected to attend, though it seems somewhat strange that Saul should have

expected David after his attempted violence.... It is worthy of observation, both in this and other passages of Scripture history, that there seems to have been felt, even by the most venerated of Scripture characters, very little scruple in the use of convenient or political untruths; and the apology which David put into the mouth of Jonathan for his absence is one of these.

11-23.—Jonathan evinces in this passage not only the strength of his friendship, but of his disinterestedness and withal his piety. His invocation to God, made up of a prayer and an oath, expresses the religiousness of his character. He also manifests the conviction he had of its being God's will that David should inherit the kingdom, and of the certainty, therefore, that it was to be alienated from his family. The covenant between David and Jonathan was mutual; and Jonathan seems, in verse 16, to pronounce an imprecation on those (whether by himself or his posterity) who should violate his part of it. It was a covenant entered upon in the spirit of genuine affection between both; and as such Jonathan desired that it should be expressed over again, as if he luxuriated in their mutual vows of fidelity and attachment.... The nineteenth verse is obscure, and there is a great variety of interpretations for it. It would seem as if David was to place himself where he hid before, at the time of some transaction which he and Jonathan of course understood, though we do not.... For the "going down quickly," see Poole. The method of conveying intelligence of the result being fixed, they took for the time their respective ways —Jonathan's final words relating to the covenant that had just been struck between them.

24-33.—There being two days of the entertainment

from which David was missed, and Jonathan leaving on the morning after the second day, make out a harmony with verse 19—where David is bidden stay three days, and then come down quickly to the place of assignation. Saul's rage may have been further whetted by his recollection of Jonathan's former kindnesses to David, as well as by the liberty he took in granting him leave of absence on this occasion. The terms of Saul's invective against his son would indicate a charge of illegitimacy, as if, had he been his real son, he could not have so unnaturally loved his father's greatest enemy—a charge which implicated his mother also, and which was sufficient to arouse the fierce anger of the otherwise gentle and affectionate Jonathan.

34-42.—It seems not very clear whether it be meant that Saul had done shame to David or Jonathan. Certain it is, that he affronted the latter both by violence and contumely. The scene at table must have taken place before they had begun eating, as it is said that Jonathan ate none that day.... The signal was put forth between Jonathan and David, as had been before concerted. At the time when the arrangement was entered into, they may not have anticipated that there would be the opportunity of a personal interview. When the time came, however, it was found to be possible; and there ensued a scene of great tenderness. It was probably on finding that nobody was within hail that the lad was dismissed in a hurry, for the purpose of this interview. David had more to suffer and part with than Joseph, as well as more to apprehend. Jonathan evinced at their separation his former strenuousness on the subject of their mutual covenant. Altogether it is a very affecting passage, most simply and beautifully told.

1 Samuel xxi.—The passage in the history of David respecting his interview with the priest, seems the one adverted to by our Saviour in the New Testament, in Mark ii. 26—notwithstanding some discrepancies which may be noticed afterwards. Let it be observed, that David tells an untruth to Ahimelech—another instance of a politic falsehood . . . . The holiness of the vessels, in verse 5, seems to be the freedom from ceremonial uncleanness of any of the implements which the young men carried with them . . . . It was a proof of David's strength, that he could, without inconvenience, bear and wield the sword of Goliath. David is now in the midst of his hard trials—a fugitive, and exposed to danger at all hands. But God was his refuge, and suggested to him expedients of relief and escape from all his perplexities. We can perceive materials enough in his affecting history for the subjects of many of his Psalms. His feigning himself to be mad, though an acted falsehood, does not so run counter to one's moral feelings, as the articulate falsehood which he uttered to Ahimelech . . . . Doeg might have been an Edomite by birth, and Israelite by proselytism—detained before the Lord, perhaps by the constraint of a vow, or otherwise. He may have been ceremonially scrupulous, while morally treacherous and base. We read of him afterwards. David had many enemies, as he himself records in the Psalms.

1 Samuel xxii. 1-6.—David's residence in the cave of Adullam must have been notour, as so many heard of it besides his relations. It was a picturesque gathering of people that drew around him; and a strange position for him to have become the captain of so many outlaws. We

may here remark, that we have now the benefit of parallel Scriptures—for the history of David is given over again in the first book of Chronicles. We learn from 1 Chron. xi. 15, that at this cave of Adullam was the rock of David —the cave being the hold.... Saul's rage against David must have extended also to his relatives—seeing that he was obliged to provide a place for his parents—old Jesse and his wife—who dwelt with the king of Moab all the time that David was in the cave. God did not forsake him, but gave him the benefit of His counsel by the mouth of one of His prophets; or at least that prophet gave the advice which he followed.

7-23.—There is a picturesqueness in the description here given of Saul: his embowered dwelling—his spear in his hand—his surrounding warriors—and withal the dark and turbid imaginations by which his distempered bosom was agitated. It is very like what we read of other guilty tyrants—when they felt themselves abandoned by the friendship of all, and their suspicions lighted upon all. He had a fit executioner in Doeg, the informer against the priests, after that the former had refused to fall upon them. Poor Ahimelech seems not to have known the state of matters between Saul and David at the time of his interview with the latter; but this saved him not from the bloody sentence which Saul pronounced upon him, and which Doeg, steeled against both the cruelty and sacrilege of the perpetration, carried into effect; and so by wicked hands, often employed as instruments by God, was the doom of the house of Eli fulfilled. It was a horrid aggravation of the violence that it should have been further discharged upon Nob, and to the extermination of all that breathed in it.

There escaped, however, one of the sons of Ahimelech —Abiathar.

1 Samuel xxiii. 1-18.—It is well that we read of Abiathar and the ephod—for this seems to have been the instrument by which inquiry was made at the Lord, and an answer obtained from Him.

This passage is of doctrinal importance, and has been adduced in the controversies on the Divine foreknowledge and predestination. God predicts what would happen on a given contingency, but which did not happen because the contingency was not supplied. God, doubtless, might have brought about the posterior event with or without the contingency, by a contravention of natural tendencies, or in other words, by miracles; but this, as we have often seen, is not the usual policy of the Divine administration. ...There is much to affect and to interest in the brief interview between David and Jonathan—probably the last they ever had. Dear Jonathan's heart was much set on the covenant which they had, and which is here renewed by them. What a fine exhibition of moral qualities in Jonathan: unalterable friendship, unshaken fidelity, freedom from ambition and selfishness!

19-29.—Poor David was sadly beset on all hands with informers and enemies; and his history reflects great light upon his Psalms. He certainly was one of the most tried of God's children; and his was one of the busiest natural as well as one of the busiest spiritual lives that ever was recorded.... Saul, no doubt, was very miserable; and the blessing which he awarded to the men of Ziph for their *compassion*, seems to me a proof of it. All things were told him against David, who doubtless acquitted himself

with skilful generalship. Yet Saul would have overmatched him, but for the interposal of a gracious Providence, that watched over him and delivered him in the hour of extremity, as he himself has often celebrated in strains of devoutest poetry. At this time he was indebted, under God, for his safety to an invasion of the Philistines. ...The Hebrew word, in verse 28, signifies "divisions" or "distractions".... These strongholds at En-gedi were probably caves—at least one of them was.

1 SAMUEL XXIV. 1-8.—Saul would not desist from the prosecution of a hostility as unrelenting as it was groundless, but returned to the object of finding out David and destroying him. His command of force gave him every human likelihood of succeeding; but the overruling agency of God defeated all his purposes. In this passage David may be said to have been indebted for his safety to the Divine supremacy over the hearts of men. It was noble in him, and a great exercise of faith, to forego the opportunity which circumstances had put into his hand of getting rid of his adversary, and then to face him in open interview—urged forward, no doubt, to such a hazardous exposure of himself by a warrantable confidence in his own integrity and the protection of his God. This faith was amply rewarded by God's operation on the heart of Saul—causing him for the time to relent from his deadly hatred, overpowered by the magnanimous generosity of the man whom he had so grievously injured.

9-22.—The remonstrance of David, along with the plain demonstration given by him that he cherished no evil or malicious design against Saul, went to the monarch's heart, for a time only no doubt, yet for as long a time as

served the purpose of David's present escape from him. David seems here to utter a malediction against Saul—that is to imprecate vengeance against him; but it is so mixed up with other feelings as to give one the impression after all, that the curses in his Psalms may not have so much of the resentful and retaliatory spirit as many ascribe to them. Perhaps there is not much more in "the Lord avenge me of thee," from verse 12, than "the Lord judge between me and thee, and deliver me out of thy hand," from verse 15. At all events he, in the very spirit of Rom. xii. 19, abstains from avenging himself, but committeth his cause to Him to whom vengeance belongeth. One likes the manifestation of Saul in this passage, which proves him to have been the subject of strong, and occasionally of right, natural sensibilities. He seems now fully possessed with the conviction that David was to succeed him in the monarchy of Israel.

1 Samuel xxv. 1-9.—The death of Samuel is a great event in Scripture history. He was truly one of its magnates, and stands, along with a few others, on the highest platform of worthies and great men whose names have been handed down to us in the Old and New Testaments. ... We are here presented with a very interesting episode in the life of David. Nabal was of good descent, being of the house of Caleb; but this forms no security either for character or temper, in which respects, however, Abigail formed a most beautiful contrast to himself. How graphically do these characters come before us; and one cannot sufficiently admire the succession of vivid pictures set forth of human life and character in the Bible, so true and faithful to nature and having such an experimental stamp

of reality upon them. Did David and his followers live on such contributions as he sought at the hand of Nabal? Perhaps he could have claimed them as a reward for protection against robbers—else it is difficult to understand how they could subsist but in the capacity of marauders themselves. It is to be kept in mind, however, that there was not the strict appropriation in those days which obtains now; that, even so far down as our Saviour's time, it was competent for the wayfarer to pluck the ears of growing corn; that there was probably much in a state of common or wilderness; that much in the way of food was therefore to be had for the gathering or catching; and, at all events, David would at all times look on the Philistines and other natural enemies as fair game for his incursions.

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10-22.—Nabal seems to have thought that the country was very loose at this time, and there was a show of reason in the question which he put. But it should be considered that, even by the acknowledgment of Nabal's own servants, David and his men had not only kept free of doing any harm, but had rendered Nabal a service, by defending his people and property against others. And this was the precise feeling that David himself had of his own claims—as having done positive good to Nabal, and got nothing but evil in return for it.... The discreetness and promptitude of Abigail are well set forth; and in regard to her gift of stores, it will alleviate the seeming disproportion between the wine and the eatables, that the bottles were two leathern bags of wine, it may have been of large capacity.

23-31.—This is a fine graphic passage in holy writ,

which sets before us the interview between Abigail and David. "Let me," she says to him, "be the person reckoned with for this iniquity, and not Nabal, of perverse temper and folly;" after which she pleads her apology, and concedes the merit of their good deportment to David and his servants. David, transported by anger, was on the eve of committing a great trespass; and doubtless this remonstrance of Abigail would have a powerful effect in opening his eyes to it, and cause him to feel the utmost gratitude to Abigail for averting him from his purpose. Her speech at the same time was most complimentary. "Let thine enemies be as Nabal,"—foolish and contemptible as he is. The state of matters between Saul and David seems to have been well known to her; and who knows but a certain ingredient of prophetic wisdom may have been bestowed upon her. The soul being "bound in the bundle of life," is placed in contrast with the soul being "cast out as from a sling." "Thou shalt be kept among the congregation of the living," well fastened there, and secured as in a bundle that has been well tied up, and not loose as in a sling whence it may be cast out. Thus the soul is held in life. (Psalm lxvi. 9.)

32-44.—David seems fully sensible of the moral danger which he had just escaped, and speaks of it with gratulation as well as gratitude to Abigail.... Nabal is the type of a class that still subsists—of surly unsocial farmers, selfish, and sometimes drunken withal. His death exemplifies the precept of avenging not ourselves, for that vengeance is the Lord's—signally fulfilled on the present occasion. ... There is also a deal of the primitive in David's brief courtship, and his consequent marriage with Abigail. It strongly exhibits the accommodating morality of that

period, suffered by God—in that the man according to His own heart married two wives, while his first wife Michal was still alive. But she was given meanwhile to another—though coarsely enough, it appears afterwards, that she came back to David, and sustained the character of his wife a second time.

1 Samuel xxvi. 1-12.—The Ziphites seem as if they had watched for Saul to give him information; and so they tell him a second time of David's hiding himself, and in the same place too. He relented only for a season, and again goes forth on the errand of destruction against the innocent and unoffending David. And God again delivered Saul into his hands, but again he spared this his most cruel enemy, and so gained the best of victories over him—heaping coals of fire upon his head. He was true to his former principle—leaving the vengeance to Him to whom alone vengeance belongeth; and this in opposition, as before, to the will of his advisers. He who, in the moment of surprise and irritation, would have killed Nabal, abstained from the life of Saul—saying that it was for the Lord to smite him if he would, but not for him. And so with pious magnanimity he forbore this new opportunity which the Lord created for him, perhaps as a trial—for it is said that the deep sleep which had fallen upon his adversaries was from the Lord. Observe again, the religious importance which David attaches to Saul being the Lord's anointed.

13-25.—We have here another example of opposite hills, with a deep intermediate ravine, so that hostile parties could speak in each other's hearing, and yet be safe from each other's attack—a feature in Jewish scenery

of which we have often heard. Saul was again softened by this new instance of David's duteous and generous forbearance.... David's proposal of an offering to God has been variously interpreted—as "let me die the death, if it be in displeasure to me that he has stirred thee up against me;" or "let us present a joint offering of peace with Him, and reconciliation with each other. But if you have been instigated by men, they do an accursed thing in driving me from the land of a pure worship, and forcing me to take refuge among idolaters, where I may be tempted to serve other gods".... Saul exhibits the same contrition as before, and also the same conviction of David's coming preferment.

1 SAMUEL XXVII.—David, it seems, distrusted Saul still, and he had good reason for it. Yet in reality and effect, Saul, whether from a change of mind, or because it was hopeless to seize on David, now beyond his reach, sought no more for him.... It seems that David acquired such an interest in Ziklag, the residence appointed for him by the king of Gath, that he retained it in his possession after his becoming king of Israel.

Mark the situation of the Amalekites on the south of the land of Israel. When Achish inquired of David—"Whither have ye made a *road* to-day?" the term is synonymous with *raid*—the Scottish version of the word, and well known in the days of Border chivalry. Yet unless he was expressly commissioned by God, we cannot approve of these predatory incursions, and this unsparing slaughter. Neither can we justify the falsehood which David practised upon his host—though God educed the fulfilment of His own purposes therefrom.

1 Samuel xxviii. 1-9.—Achish must by this time have had a respectful sense of David's ability to do him service—seeing that not only did he seek his aid in the war against Israel, but promised him great preferment in the event of his compliance. David's answer had an ambidextrous generality, which is of a piece with other instances of his politic and wary management.

The death of Samuel is recurred to for the explanation of Saul's other methods, by which he sought for supernatural information and guidance in his present trying circumstances. Saul cast about for direction, under the impulse of great perplexity and terror, but found that all the ordinary and established channels of communication with Heaven were shut against him; and in the spirit of that distempered superstitiousness by which he was so remarkably characterized, and with his accustomed inconsistency, he sought after those who had familiar spirits, whom he aforetime sought to destroy and put out of the kingdom.

10-25.—My whole inclination is towards the literalities of this passage—that God did raise Samuel on the incantations of her who had the familiar spirit being performed, and that a real converse took place between him and Saul. There can obvious explanations be offered for her discovery of Saul and the accompanying cry of alarm, and also of Saul's question as to the form of the apparition, without adopting the conception of Matthew Henry and others. I think it very impressive when Samuel complains of having been disquieted, and when he tells Saul that he and his sons should be with him to-morrow—all in harmony with the doctrine of an intermediate Hades, where the disembodied spirits of men dwell till the day

of resurrection. It is a dark passage in the history of poor Saul, with the fears and distresses of whose troubled soul one cannot help sympathizing. But, on the whole, we think it a sound Christian philosophy to understand the narrative just as it is set before us.

1 SAMUEL XXIX.—We see the overruling Providence of God in disposing the hearts of the Philistine lords against David, which led to the complete extrication of him from these enemies of Israel, which does not seem to be capable of having been achieved otherwise, unless that David by a palpable act of treachery, had abandoned the Philistines and joined forces with his countrymen. Yet David is not altogether free of what is discreditable in his speech to Achish, when he professes that he would do what it is very probable he had not the intention of doing—that is, fighting against the enemies of the Philistines. It is interesting to note the remonstrances of the lords, grounded on what they knew of David and of his history; and it is further interesting to observe the political state of society among them—not an absolute government vested in one man, but a government limited and kept in check by the powerful barons of that rude and early period—much as the kings of Europe in the Middle Ages were by the proud and lawless aristocracy which surrounded them.

1 SAMUEL XXX. 1-8.—The Amalekites very naturally retaliated on David for the war of extermination which he had held before with their countrymen somewhere else in that neighbourhood; and it seems very remarkable, and *prima facie* in favour of the Amalekites, that whereas David spared neither man nor woman alive on the

occasion of his incursion against them, they slew not any "but only carried them away captive." One can imagine the greatness of the distress; yet I cannot sympathize with the tendency of the people to visit all their calamities on their rulers, as often in the case of Moses, and now in the case of David. It was just a conjuncture for the composition of a psalm, when, beset with danger and the hard speeches of his companions-in-arms, he nevertheless encouraged himself in the Lord his God. And he also inquired of God, who gave him countenance and direction, meeting his inquiries with an affirmative which warranted his pursuit after the Amalekites.

9-19.—We are here presented with the hardships and calamities of war—in the breaking down of two hundred of David's men from fatigue, and still more in the case of the poor Egyptian who fell sick and was left to expire in the agonies of hunger. He was fearful of rough usage both at the hands of David's men and at the hands of his master. It is remarkable that he should ask them to swear that they would do him no harm, and swear by God too. There was still among these idolatrous nations the recognition of one God, and the sacred obligation of an oath in His name.... It is a picturesque representation of the victors, who abandoned themselves to all sorts of rude jollity and riot. They little dreamed in their state of false security, of what was awaiting them. God fulfilled His own prophecy in behalf of His inquiring servant, and visited his enemies with a great destruction.... The camels here mentioned, bring home the identity of practice which obtains at the same place in very distant ages. David experienced the faithfulness of the Divine promise, and without fail recovered all.

20-31.—There is evidently a division of cattle into two droves, in verse 20—probably those that were recovered from the Amalekites, and which would be restored to their original owners, and then others over and above, which were taken from the Amalekites, who were rich in the spoils of the Philistines; and these they set in front of the others, and followed with the triumphal song of this being the spoil of David—these be the trophies of his victory .... Let us not wonder that there were wicked men and men of Belial among the followers of David. A villain and a vagabond are nearly synonymous, from the charm which a wandering and predatory life holds out to men who are free from the restraints of principle. We here see that the spoil was not said to be David's, because his personally—but as a complimentary ascription to him of the glory of its capture. Still, in virtue of his authority as their leader, he overruled the distribution of it, and established a righteous precedent for all time coming.

A good deal of the spoil, however, must have been reserved by himself, for the presents of which we here read. He sent them, it is said, to his friends—of whom it may be presumed that he acquired a great many in all the places where he used to haunt; and we have no doubt that in this way he would greatly strengthen and extend that interest, in virtue of which, proximately speaking, he was afterwards crowned king at Hebron.

1 Samuel xxxi.—Thus terminates the dark and tragical history of Saul. One's heart bleeds for him. There were good sensibilities about him, distempered as he was; and carried by the influence of his morbid jealousies and fears to fearful atrocities of conduct. Yet his delinquencies

and crimes were the result more of impulses and brooding imaginations than of aught like deep or deliberate villany. His sun set in darkness on Mount Gilboa, where the sorely wounded man put an end to his own life, and with his own hand made over his dead body to the wanton outrage of his enemies. What a degradation to Israel, to have the mangled relics of their monarch set forth in triumph from the wall of one of their own captured towns, now in possession of the idolatrous Philistines!... Jabesh-gilead stands signalized now for the third time in Scripture history. It here repairs the disgrace which had fallen upon it from not joining with the rest of Israel in wiping off the national scandal that had been inflicted by the tribe of Benjamin. Their present exploit was a high act of patriotism and honour.... What a catastrophe for poor Jonathan—one of the most truly loveable of our Scripture characters! Had his life been spared, it might have told on the future history of the nation, and certainly not so as to harmonize with the designs of that wise Providence which withdrew him from the scene.

II. SAMUEL.

2 Samuel i. 1-16.—David's question—"How went the matter?" speaks for the interest he took in the war between the Philistines and Israelites—a war in which he would have taken part had he not been discharged from it by the envy of the Philistine lords. The interest he felt in it, however, was not understood—it being the interest of a pure and high patriotism, not that of a selfish ambition. The Amalekite must have put the latter

construction upon it, and sorely suffered for his miscalculation. The punishment of death which was inflicted upon him, however, was for a different crime than the one he was guilty of, it being for the slaughter of Saul, whereof he was innocent; but he suffered for his deceit—and one cannot help feeling that his fate was a severe one.... David evinces, in this passage, the strong sense he had of the sacredness of that king's person whom the Lord had anointed—a principle he ever observed towards Saul amid his manifold temptations to put it aside.

17-27.—This is one of the finest poetical effusions in Scripture. The prefatory notice, in verse 18, is variously understood. It may have been that David, before he delivered his beautiful and affecting elegy in the hearing of the people, may have delivered a military lesson on the use of the bow, and given instructions in the art of war, recorded at greater length in the book of Jasher. The composition itself is truly a gem, and presents to great advantage the combination of David's gifts both as a warrior and a poet. The wounded patriotism and honour of his bosom are impressively set forth; and then breaks out the sense he had of the sacredness of that royalty which was constituted by a prescribed anointment from on high. The tribute rendered to Saul along with Jonathan may have been no exaggeration in as far as regards their mutual affection and the kindly domestic feelings of the monarch, when not ruffled by aught to agitate or disturb his over-sensitive spirit. There were good points in Saul, and I cannot help a certain liking and regard for him. But the overpowering sentiment of the piece is his love for Jonathan; while his address to the daughters of Israel, and his denunciations on the mountains of

Gilboa are highly poetical. It is altogether a most touching production.

2 SAMUEL II. 1-11.—David had so fortified his interests in Judea and about Hebron that he might count on a favourable reception there; and, accordingly, was crowned king of Judah.... His message to Jabesh-gilead had a policy in it as well as principle—it being for the credit and commendation of David, and fitted to disarm the friends of Saul of their hostility against him, that he should exhibit the zeal which he had for the honour and memory of his old master. We are confident, however, that it was but the exhibition of what he honestly felt.

And so, for a short time, Israel was rent into two different governments; and here we may see in embryo the rivalship and opposition of interests between Judah and the rest of Israel, which afterwards broke out into a more permanent form.... The kingdom of Ish-bosheth took in all but Judah—yet they are only some of the tribes which are particularized; and among others Benjamin, which probably adhered to Saul's house on the principle of his family being of their own tribe, though after the secession in the days of Rehoboam they abode with Judah.... Gilead comprehends all that is on the other side of Jordan. If the Ashurites mean those of the tribe of Asher, this reaches to the extreme north, and the vale of Jezreel was centrally placed among the tribes of Zebulun, Naphtali, and Issachar—so that all the tribes are as good as enumerated, save Simeon, which lay straggling around the borders of Judah. It should be remarked, that Ish-bosheth's reign was only two years, whereas David's in Hebron was seven and a half, marking a period of four and a

half in which there were probably great anarchy and misrule in Israel.

12-23.—There now come forth on the stage the men of David, who had been schooled by their warlike and predatory habits when wandering like outlaws, and afterwards figured as regular commanders in the armies of their great king. Of these the most noted is Joab, of ferocious and rude nature, but of great ascendency and power withal—so as to have kept the monarch himself in awe.... There seems to have been a preparatory trial of strength got up by a challenge on the part of Abner, and which ushered in the general engagement in which the men of Israel were defeated and put to flight. It proved fatal, however, to one of the most distinguished men on the side of the victors, Asahel, the brother of Joab—slain by Abner, whom he pursued so closely as to come within his reach. Abner seems to have acted generously by him; and bade him try his hand on some of the young men whom he might more easily vanquish and disarm, instead of measuring strength with himself:—"Then all reconciliation with Joab would be hopeless, should I kill his brother. I want to be on practicable terms with him, in the event of any negotiation after this day's engagement. Do not raise a barrier in its way by necessitating me to inflict that death upon you which will make him implacable"—a death which, as it afterwards turned out, and agreeably to the anticipation that seems to have been in his mind, could only be expiated by Abner's own death.

24-32.—There is a sort of relenting patriotism about Abner, and regret for the evils of a civil war. This may have prompted now his remonstrance when he seems wishful to propitiate, as appears, indeed, in his converse

with Asahel. Joab's reply is variously interpreted—though it is likely enough that he cast the blame of this day's proceedings upon Abner, who by his challenge in the morning had provoked the battle of the day. Both parties, however, seemed equally alive to the unseemliness of such a war among brethren. Abner, surrounded by his Benjamites and standing on an eminence, held secure parley with Joab, who probably did not yet know of his having slaughtered Asahel—else there might have been instant revenge and a prolongation of the battle.... The out-goings of this rude fracas, in the respective ways taken by the hostile chiefs and their followers, are characteristically given at the close of the chapter.

2 Samuel iii. 1-16.—This long war between the two houses must have been partly in the reign of Ish-bosheth, which lasted but two years, and partly under some other government—as David's reign over Judah in Hebron was seven years and a half.... It is remarkable, that in the account here given of David's family, his six sons had all different mothers. The most noted names are those of Amnon, Absalom, and Adonijah.... We have a specimen of coarse morality in the passage between Abner and Ish-bosheth, where we also note the humiliating dependence of the monarch upon the great captain-general of his forces. Abner in sending messengers to David with the question, "Whose is the land?" seems to intimate an acknowledgment of the land's being his as the rightful monarch of it—though, apart from a Divine warrant, we do not see that David acted with perfect integrity in negotiating for the dethronal of Ish-bosheth. His demand, however, for his wife Michal was a very fair one. There is something

picturesque in her being followed by the weeping husband, and sent back on the stern command of Abner.

17-31.—Abner, in reasoning with the elders on behalf of David, alleges, among other things, the Lord's preference for David; and certainly this forms the justification of David for the countenance he gave to the measures which were set on foot against Ish-bosheth—even that he was expressly appointed by God to the kingdom in the place of Saul, as may be distinctly seen in the commission given to Samuel. Then follows the deed of unruly Joab—a truly rough warrior, and whose whole character is in keeping with the rudest times, whether of Border or feudal barbarism, when revenge was implacable, and at the bidding of a wild honour rested not till appeased by the blood of its victim. There was the grossest treachery in this vile assassination. It was a most natural and good reaction which it awoke in the breast of David, who, though he did not—perhaps could not—punish Joab for this foul misdeed—yet was not in such humiliating dependence upon him as to be like Ish-bosheth, who could not answer a word to Abner because he feared him. On the contrary, he spake openly to Joab and all the people, and ordered them to join in mourning for the slain. It seems that Abishai, too, was engaged along with his brother Joab in this base adventure.

32-39.—David had protested both his own innocence and that of his kingdom or government of the death of Abner, it being the unauthorized act of a private assassin. He follows out this protestation at the funeral—pronouncing a brief elegy on the deceased: He died not as a fool who rashly exposed himself to a danger which he ought to have shunned, nor as a criminal who falls by the

hand of justice, but as a generous and confiding warrior, basely and treacherously made away with. David made himself exceedingly popular by this exhibition; and his subjects gave him full, and we doubt not deserved, credit for the sincerity of his grief. It is a noble and affecting tribute which he renders to the great man who had fallen in Israel. He would have been greatly the better of him as a counterpoise to the sons of Zeruiah, those freebooters and feudal grandees who were too hard for him—a confession of helplessness which lets us into the yet unsettled state of the monarchy to which he had come.

2 Samuel iv.—I can well imagine the consternation of Ish-bosheth and Israel on hearing of the death of Abner. Beside the feebleness of Ish-bosheth, there is allusion made here to the childhood and helplessness of another of Saul's house, Mephibosheth—so that its interest seemed utterly gone, and a way opened for the preferment of David to the government of all Israel. This seems to have lured the two assassins to the murder of poor Ish-bosheth .... The Beerothites had migrated from their original town to Gittaim—from what cause is not mentioned—but they still retained the generic name for themselves, which they derived from the first town. Rechab and Baanah suffered for their foul deed, as the Amalekite at Ziklag had done before them, and more deservedly. The gravamen of their crime is well put by David .... Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan, had peculiar claims upon him.

2 Samuel v. 1-16.—All conspired to the establishment of David as universal monarch over God's peculiar people. The considerations on which the offer was made to him

by the elders of Israel were various: the affinity of blood—his former services in generalship—and, above all, the Divine appointment. The coronation took place accordingly; but not without a compact between the parties—a league which, as made before the Lord, implies an obligation on both sides to the observance of its articles. How young it appears David must have been when he underwent all the vicissitudes and dangers which are heretofore recorded of him—only twenty-three when elevated to the throne in Hebron; and previous to which what a life of peril and adventure he had to go through! It was truly a severe discipline; but he was cradled thereby to a great and glorious manhood. His first exploit when king of all Israel was the capture of Jerusalem.... The insulting defiance of the Jebusites is variously interpreted. Some make "the blind and the lame" to be the images or idols on the walls, which David had characterized as having neither sight nor hearing, but in which the Jebusites trusted and gloried. This interpretation meets and satisfies the other clauses in which they are introduced—their being hated of David, and after the capture of the city their never having place more in it.... All was now prosperous with David—his public works—messages of respect from abroad—the increase of his own family.

17-25.—This is the first time that we read of the Philistines since their defeat of Saul; but they would not be unconcerned spectators of what was going on in Israel, and seem to have mustered together for a great effort on hearing of this new preferment of David. He first went into a place of security, and then inquired of the Lord whether he should go forth into action against them. After their defeat, he showed his abhorrence of idolatry by burning

their images. It is remarkable that in the second action he was directed not to go openly up against the Philistines, but to make use of tactics and manœuvring; or to put forth in the matter an instrumentality of second causes. And this did not exclude the special interposition from on high—for it is said, that after he had done as directed, "then the Lord should go out before him, and smite the Philistines." This seems another demonstration of a limit on miracles, and at the same time accords with the very general lesson, that we are not to look for God's blessing without the prescribed means, but in and on the prescribed means.

2 Samuel vi. 1-15.—If Baale of Judah be the same with Kirjath-jearim, where the ark was, and which is also named Kirjath-baal—then ere David and his associates went from it, they must have gone to it. And however the clause which involves the name may be interpreted, we must feel an interest in this appellative for God, that He dwelleth between the cherubims which covered the mercy-seat... Gibeah signifies a hill. (1 Sam. vii. 1.)... No wonder at the joy expressed by David and his followers, according to the wonted manifestations of that period. But there was, at the same time, a manifestation of God's jealousy against all unhallowed freedoms, and an awful vindication of His sacredness in the death of Uzzah, which put an end for the time to the mirth of this great occasion. The death of Uzzah, along with the visible blessing of Obed-edom, prove how much Israel in these days was ruled by temporal sanctions, so palpable that the people understood them as such. This blessing re-assured the heart of the king; and he again ventured to take up the

ark from the house of Obed-edom—accompanying it with such movements and such music, both vocal and instrumental, as were customary in the religious services and solemnities of that day. In the book of Psalms we are called to praise His name in the dance, to praise Him with the timbrel and dance. (Psalm cxlix. 3; cl. 4.)

16-23.—Michal had felt that David disgraced and demeaned himself by thus mingling with the common people, and perhaps conceived him guilty of indecorum, in having thrown off his upper garment to dance before their eyes. At least she upbraided him with this; and one can imagine the feeling of uncongeniality that would come over his heart, when the current of its best and holiest affections was thus arrested. David's reply was in point to the accusation that was cast at him: It was not before the maid-servants that he danced, but before the Lord. And whereas she perhaps plumed herself on her kingly descent, he adverts to the preferment which he had received from Him whom he was thus celebrating, and by which he had obtained the pre-eminence over her father and all his house. He also expresses his readiness to humble himself still more in doing honour to the God of Heaven—as also his confidence that, so far from forfeiting reputation among the people thereby, he would rise higher in their estimation. Certain it is, that consistent and devoted piety earns at length the respect of the multitude. The childlessness of Michal ever after, may have proceeded either from a direct judgment by God, or from the alienation of her displeased husband.

January, **1844.**

2 Samuel vii. 1-11.—This matter of David's offering to build a house for the Lord, was held by Stephen, in the

Acts, to be of sufficient importance for having a place in his summary of Scripture history. When Nathan the prophet spake his own sense of this question, it turned out to be different from what he spoke as an inspired man, after that God had given him a specific revelation on the subject, and told him that He yet declined the offer which had been made, while He promised that, notwithstanding this, He would vouchsafe the same protection and peace to Israel under David that He had done to them under the Judges, when He only had a tent and tabernacle to dwell in. And more than this, He promises that though not yet honoured by the services of a temple, as He had advanced and preserved him hitherto, He would establish him as the head of a family that should last for evermore —and more particularly, that Canaan should be a quiet habitation to His people, from which they should never be ejected. This promise has been temporarily forfeited, but afterwards, we trust, to be made good finally and fully.

12-29.—The same may be said of the perpetuity which He again promises to the kingdom, in connexion with Solomon as well as David—although David in his song of praise, speaks of its being an establishment not for everlasting, but for a good while to come.... It is a striking exhibition of God's dealing with His own, when He speaks of chastening, but not abandoning. It is also an interesting harmony between the direct history of David's life, and his known compositions, when we fall upon the instances of his breaking forth in his own characteristic vein of devotional poetry. It presents an evidence in favour of both. The deep humility and thankfulness of the monarch are alike conspicuous in this composition. We here see, and especially in verse 24, that the promise, so

far from superseding prayer, evokes it, supplies the topic, and also the ground on which it is made. This is still more distinctly brought out in verse 27. In this and the concluding verses we see very clearly the prayer and the promise implicated with each other.

2 SAMUEL VIII.—We have here a record of David's victories and his prosperity, after that he had been fully established in the kingdom. He destroyed two-thirds of the Moabites by lot—either perhaps in sections of the meted-out country, or in the aggregates of people, as he successively reached them. Let us hope that "the *full* line to keep alive," denotes an inclination for stretching mercy to the uttermost.... He seems to have had two engagements with the Syrians, and to have got a still larger celebrity from the second than he even had before.... The splendour of his victories drew upon him the homage of friendly powers , and, what with their gifts and the spoils of his enemies, we can understand how so much treasure came to be accumulated in his hands for the building of the temple. These he dedicated to the Lord, who preserved him continually. And besides all these triumphs abroad, he signalized himself by his righteous administration at home.... The record of his household or court proves that his power was limited, notwithstanding—being obliged to tolerate Joab, and to acquiesce in his appointment to the high office of commander-in-chief over the forces—a strong testimony to the popularity and the military talents of this turbulent and formidable grandee.... Some would have the Cherethites and Pelethites to be foreigners, as Philistines—like our own kings having a German regiment; but the general opinion is that these names were

expressive of some particular services, whether civil or military. . . . The members of the royal family had their offices and preferments, as in our own day.

2 SAMUEL IX.—David's question at Ziba proves most strikingly the tumults and engrossments of that busy period, when David had lost sight of Jonathan's family, in favour of whom he was bound to show all kindness. We have here a specimen of the way in which he acquits himself of this obligation, after he was in circumstances of tranquillity for looking around him, and could now assign a secure livelihood or pension to any who might have claims upon him. This is a pleasing passage in the history of David. He granted to Mephibosheth his own personal subsistence at the royal table; and for the subsistence of his retinue, consisting of his son and servants, he assigned the large property which belonged to Saul, and placed it under the stewardship of Ziba. "Thy master's son having food to eat," may refer to the subsistence of his establishment, and does not necessarily conflict with the idea that he himself was a constant guest at the table of David.

2 SAMUEL X.—Nahash, though cruelly hostile to Israel when under Saul, had been kind to David. But the son was not like the father in this; and returned the proper and right gratitude of David by a most ignominious treatment of his servants. There may have been a real suspicion of him in the mind of Hanun; but this does not justify either the principle or policy of the wanton affront inflicted on the ambassadors from Israel. His nation were sensible that they must have, in consequence of this,

come into ill odour with the people who had been thus insulted, and prepared for an attack. Joab, who seems to have been a great stay and strength all along, was general in this expedition; but soon found himself between two hostile armies, having the Ammonites on the one side and their auxiliaries on the other. His brother Abishai was charged with the battle against the latter, while Joab undertook the conflict with the Syrians; so that they were the sons of Zeruiah, of whom David had complained as being too hard for him, that had the chief honour and burden of this first part of the war.... The utterance of Joab consisted of good, patriotic, and withal pious sentiments.... After this the Syrians rallied under Hadarezer: when David undertook the war in person and gained a complete victory over him. The king of Syria, in chapter viii. is named Hadadezer.

2 Samuel xi. 1-13.—Joab, as commander-in-chief, is again set forth on a new expedition against the Ammonites. Then follows a memorable example of human frailty, exhibited by the man according to God's own heart, and recorded for our admonition to whom the latter ends of the world have come. It teaches us to refrain from looking upon—for he who so looketh as David did, hath already committed sin.—Turn our sight and eyes from viewing vanity, and let us make a covenant with our eyes. ... It may well demonstrate the criminality of licentiousness, that if not in itself the object of so strong and clear a moral indignancy as it ought—such by nature is the shame of it, that, to avoid exposure, men will have recourse to arts which call forth the instant and decisive moral indignancy of all. And accordingly David, when he learned

that the matter could be no longer hid, fell upon such measures of concealment as might at least screen himself—first sending for Uriah, and when that experiment failed, getting him drunk, which failed also. He went not to his house on either of the occasions when David made the trial. Doubtless the mind of Uriah was overruled by Him who brings good out of evil, and who hath bequeathed this history to the Church for the warning of His saints in all ages.

14-27.—Then comes the climax of David's sad transgression, in that he became the murderer of Uriah, to get quit of the consequences of his fall. Surely the crime which directly leads to such enormities, should not be designated as a mere infirmity or frailty!... There was perhaps somewhat of malignant satire in the message of Joab, which was certainly ill-fitted to disguise the matter which David wanted to keep secret. There seems to have been an attempt at artful concealment in the reply of David. It is well to mark, not the atrocities alone, but the mean and miserable shifts to which this wretched indulgence reduces the men who fall into it. Yet good cometh out of evil, and the penitential psalm which is regarded as the fruit of this transgression, has been bequeathed to the Church for its comfort as well as its warning in all future ages. Well might David pray, "Deliver me from blood-guiltiness, O God!"

The iniquity was consummated by the mourning of Bath-sheba for her husband—of whose destruction she had been the occasion, and by the marriage of David with one whom he had previously seduced into adultery.—Teach us all circumspection, O Lord, and grant that holiness of heart without which no one can see Thy face.

2 Samuel xii. 1-14.—The displeasure of God was conveyed to David by Nathan in a parable of exquisite beauty, and with a power of application which brought home the truth to the heart of the royal offender, making it manifest first to his conscience or moral sense, that it was a great enormity which had been depicted by the prophet, and then to his consciousness that it was the very enormity into which he himself had fallen. Those are the best sermons which say to each of the hearers—"Thou art the man!"—What a warrant is here given for the use of illustration and analogy in the pulpit!... David was pardoned on his confession—that is, he did not forfeit, because of his sin, the favour of God as one of His spiritual and immortal family. He still retained this status; but was nevertheless subjected to the severest temporal penalties because of it. Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth .... What a fearful prediction is denounced against David, and how literally it was fulfilled in the case of Absalom—reminding one of a passage in the prophets, where the punishment of a father's licentiousness is made to lie in the abandonment to utter and disgraceful licentiousness of his own family. This great transgression is a key to the future history of David and its manifold trials. The affair must have transpired—as it had given occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme, and therefore must the Lord vindicate His own righteousness by a visible infliction upon David—and what more apposite than that the fruit of his transgression should be taken away.

15-25.—The first visible chastisement or bitter fruit of David's transgression is here recorded. David's anxieties and prayers for the child when yet alive, and his resignation

and tranquillity after it was dead, are both alike natural. The elders had quite miscalculated the influence upon the mind of the afflicted king; but the real history is in perfect keeping with all experience of the workings of the human heart. The object was no longer to be prayed about, and far less to be felt about than before. So much more tolerable is a state of decision, even when adverse, than a state of uncertainty and suspense.... God's love to Solomon is a striking instance of His readiness to forget and to forgive. The criminality of the marriage from which he sprung was all now blotted out from the book of His remembrance, as one of those things that had been borne off to a wilderness or place not inhabited, and where no more mention is made of it.... Nathan called Solomon Jedidiah, because he was beloved of the Lord.

26-31.—The narrative of the siege of Rabbah is now resumed. The city of waters is a fine poetical name for it. Joab did an act of fealty to the king in devolving the actual capture of it upon him, after that he in effect had taken it himself, by reducing it to a state of utter defencelessness. This, however, did not suspend the fighting against it by David, who thus obtained the ostensible glory of the conquest. There was magnanimity in Joab declining to have the city called by his name. One can read with some degree of satisfaction of David being crowned, and his people being enriched from the spoils of the city; but there is something truly barbaric and revolting in the tortures which he inflicted on the poor Ammonites. There was a strong remainder of the savage nature in the spirit of that age. Causing them to pass through the brick-kiln was, I fear, burning them to death, and perhaps by a gradual process too. It calls for

unmixed indignation. And this he did not to Rabbah only, but to all the cities of the children of Ammon. And after this work of cruelty they returned in triumph to Jerusalem.

2 Samuel xiii. 1-10.—This Tamar must have been the sister of Absalom, by the same mother too—whereas Amnon and she had different mothers. Some of the expressions here used admit of a better construction for Amnon than is usually put upon them. It is possible that he may have been vexed at himself for having come under the power of a vile affection, and that his thinking it hard, may have been the feeling of a great moral obstacle in the way of its indulgence. It may have been, however, the intent passion of a heart resolved upon its object, while thwarted by the difficulties of its attainment. Out of these, however, the subtle Jonadab effectually helped him, and laid down an infamous scheme for the entrapment of the poor sister.

11-21.—We have here the recital of Amnon's disgraceful crime, followed up by the aggravation of a most barbarous severity inflicted on Tamar.... It is not probable that she believed that David would ever sanction their marriage, but she employed this as an argument to divert Amnon from his purpose. Howbeit, after the perpetration, she remonstrated against her ignominious dismissal as a still worse injury, probably under the impression now that if the crime had been concealed, the law might have been dispensed with, and a marriage been agreed to. Instead of which, publicity, and other ruinous and fatal consequences, resulted from the forcible ejection of her by Amnon, through the rude instrumentality of his own

servant. Poor Tamar gave way to the anguish of her spirit, and made the thing known to her brother Absalom. It came also to the ears of David, who, with all his moral indignation at the atrocity, may perhaps have here read his own punishment for his own sin in the matter of Bath-sheba—his own evil affection chastised by the giving up to a still viler affection one of his own children. This is the second act of a corrective discipline done to David in consequence of the great transgression into which he himself fell.

22-39.—The silence of Absalom was very portentous. Would he have killed Amnon, had David accepted his invitation and been present at the feast? There was great atrocity in this deed of Absalom, notwithstanding his just indignation at Amnon. The deed was foully done.... We may here remark, from Absalom's address to his servants, how heroism and a certain nobleness of courage may be associated in men's minds with deeds of foulest treachery and assassination. The subtle Jonadab again comes into the narrative.... One can easily imagine the turmoil and crowding to which such an event would give rise. The poor king was thus punished a second time *in kind*: first in Amnon's outrage, akin to his own deed with Bath-sheba—second, in Absalom's murder of his brother, akin to the murder of Uriah. He mourned every day of the season that he did mourn for Amnon, which lasted three years at the least. His comfort at last concerning Amnon, seeing he was dead, is analogous somewhat to the calmness that returned to him after the death of Bath-sheba's child; and so his affection returned to the living Absalom.

2 Samuel xiv. 1-11.—Joab must have had a sort of

rough friendship for his royal master, for he seems to have acted not from any desire himself for the return of Absalom, but because he saw that the king's heart was towards him. The device he fell upon is strongly characteristic of the genius of a period when much that was communicated was by action or allegory, rather than by express words. In the relation which it bore to David this woman's story was in fact a parable—framed, like that of Nathan, to meet the king's own case. The ninth verse appears to me as a kind of urgency on the king by the woman, to bring him to a more specific decision, instead of a general promise that he would take charge of the case: Let the iniquity be on me and mine, if I have not represented the matter truly—only let the king be free from the guilt of putting off his judgment. And, accordingly, in verse 10, he did come forth with a more express assurance, and which distinctly told that she should be protected from all further molestation. "They shall quench my coal which is left" is beautifully poetical. But she is not yet done with her importunity; and brings the king to something still more specific, by calling on him to remember the forgiveness of God even for blood, which might well go home to the king's own conscience, and begging therefore that he would protect her and hers from the revengers of blood. This brought on the distinct promise of a secure immunity for her son, and so prepares for the *dénouement* of the final application.

12-17.—Having brought the king to the desired point, this wise woman proceeds to make the application of what may be called her parable, which falls infinitely short, however, of Nathan's application. She reasons with him on the injury done to Israel—the people of God—by not

recalling one who, in some degree at least, was the hope of Israel. It is faulty to judge one way and act another. We must needs die. Perhaps, if Absalom be let die previous to his recall, then he will go from us irrecoverably; but God, who is no respecter of persons, did devise means for reconciling David to Himself, who had gone far astray; and why should not David recall also the offending Absalom?... There is an ambiguity in verse 15. It bears a double meaning, according as it is applied to the woman's son or to Absalom:—if to the former, the people had made her so afraid, who threatened to take away his life; if to the latter, the people at large had made her so afraid of tumults and insurrections, should Absalom not be recalled, that she was resolved to speak to the king—making this her apology for her presumption; and concluding with the highest expression of her deference and respect for him.

18-33.—David now saw through the device, and asked if the hand of Joab was not in it?—which very question implied a certain feeling of dependence on this the most powerful of his captains and courtiers. There was talent in Joab laying down this scheme, and suggesting such a story to the woman. David, with his real desire for Absalom, was not displeased to be thus practised on, though the woman, perhaps apprehensive of this, did her best to propitiate him by her compliments. He accordingly gave orders to Joab, who was all obeisance and respect, for the recall of Absalom. He, however, after his son's return to Jerusalem, forbade his coming to him, and thus publicly marked his displeasure against him. This lasted for two years; and, meanwhile, Absalom diligently cultivated the affections of the people, for which his beauty and fasci-

nating manners gave him great advantage. It is interesting to mark his respect for his sister Tamar, in giving her name to his daughter.... The refusal of Joab to come to Absalom seems to imply that the courtiers of David, as well as himself, were keeping their distance from him. Absalom, however, succeeded in his device for forcing Joab to an interview, which found him access to his father, and so to a reconciliation.

2 SAMUEL XV. 1-6.—Absalom now gives the reins to his ambition, and for the sake of its objects cultivates the arts of popularity. There must have been great heartlessness, and want of natural affection withal, about him —for though under a sense of injured honour he could revenge the disgrace of his sister, yet under the goadings of an appetency for power, he could also plot the dethronement of his father. For this purpose he lays himself out, that he might ingratiate the multitude, and alienate them from their loyalty to David, by reflecting on the want of justice under his government: "There was no deputy;" and "O that I were made one." This was broad enough; and perhaps in that age it required nothing more dexterous or refined than this, to gain the confidence and good will of the people.

7-22.—Absalom again obtains leave of absence from his father on a false pretext, and with a view to cover a second black design—the first being for the death of his brother, and the second for the dethronement of that very parent on whose indulgence and credulity he was now practising.... David is again plunged in fresh trials; and in the conspiracy of Absalom, the desertion of Ahithophel and others, as well as the maledictions of his own

servants, who reviled him, though their greatest benefactor, would he find ample materials for the complaints of deceit and enmity, and withal for the prayers which occur so abundantly in his Psalms.... The Gittites were a foreign body-guard, which would so far make David unpopular, and give Absalom the advantage over him.... David makes trial of Ittai's fidelity, by proposing that he should return to Jerusalem, and dwell with the king (Absalom) there. He even urges the consideration on which he foregoes all claim upon him, and with expressions of great kindness; but Ittai withstands the proposal, and abides with David.

23-37.—The presence and sight of the king awakened a general sympathy wherever he was in person; but this hindered not the preponderance of Absalom's force and influence on the whole—at least for the time being.... The goodness and resignation of David mark strongly his subdued and right spirit, partly induced we doubt not by the humility of his own conscious transgressions. He fell —but it was the fall of the upright—and he rose again; submitting himself meekly, in the meantime, to the will of God.... The procession up the mount of Olives, on the east of Jerusalem, is a truly affecting one.... The brief prayer of David against Ahithophel reminds one strongly of the frequent references which he makes to his enemies in the Psalms. But to prayer he added the devices of his own policy, as is evident from the directions given by him to Hushai, and which issued at length in the defeat of Ahithophel's counsel.... The trials and chastisements which David underwent, consequent on his great transgression, form a most instructive commentary on the ways of God and the methods of his discipline.

2 Samuel xvi. 1-14.—David met with fresh trials on his journey, both from the deceit and the violence of wicked men—evils which he deplores so feelingly in his sacred compositions. The former of these he met with in the person of Ziba, who by false suggestions supplanted for a time his master Mephibosheth, the son of Saul, and obtained the grant of all his property.

The latter he met with in Shimei, who was of the family of Saul, and had therefore a provocative if not a justifiable reason for urging him on. He bids David come out from Jerusalem, and vacate his ill-gotten throne—charging him with all the crimes of an ambitious usurper, but whose misdeeds had all been returned upon his own head. He speaks like a man fired with the injuries that had been done to his own kindred. The answer of David to the proposal of Abishai is worthy of all notice. Shimei's accusation was false; but David was deeply conscious of other iniquities which the Lord knew, and therefore takes the cursing of Shimei as a chastisement from Heaven. Thus may we all be soft and humble under the unmerited reproaches of men, though innocent of what they lay to our charge, and that under the overwhelming conviction that against God, though perhaps against God only, we have sinned. He commits himself therefore to God, in the humble hope that God would yet pity and do him good. It is remarkable, that in this the season of his adversity and helplessness he should have acted so independently of the sons of Zeruiah, of whom he formerly complained that they were too hard for him.... One should like to know if that gully can still be pointed out which separated Shimei from David and his company, or if there yet be a hill-side over against them, whom I

figure to be still on the mountain of Olives, whence Shimei could be heard and cast stones that might reach them. The mount of Olives has three summits, with hollows between them.

15-23.—David must have been apprised of Absalom's purposed occupation of Jerusalem, and retired before him as of superior force. Many flocked to Absalom from all parts, and among the rest Hushai, whom he in surprise questioned, because of his known devotion to David and his interests. He was easily persuaded, however, of Hushai's sincerity, who professed to follow the leadings both of Providence and the popular mind in determining for Absalom as called to the throne both by the *vox populi* and *vox Dei*. He even employs his friendship to the father as an argument for his fidelity to the son. Then follows Ahithophel's atrocious advice for doing away all half measures and the indecision consequent on them, and for imparting to the cause of this rebellion all the strength which could be imparted to it by the utter hopelessness of all reconciliation. The thing was placed beyond recovery, and nothing but a stout and resolved hostility could bear the matter through .... How David was punished in the licentiousness of his own children and near kinsmen!

2 Samuel xvii. 1-14.—Ahithophel, in the confidence of that respect which all had for his counsel, proceeds to give another advice, which if followed would in all likelihood have established the fortunes of Absalom. It marks strongly the desperate length to which Absalom had carried his parricidal rebellion, that he was pleased with the counsel which included in it the death of his own father.

It was overruled, however, by the counsel of Hushai, whose counter advice was given with the utmost skill. What Ahithophel proceeds on, viz., that David and his men were weary and weak-handed, is turned by Hushai, who represents them as mighty men chafed in their minds, and besides, that David was not to be gotten at by the mere putting of the people to flight, for that he would not be among them, but according to the habit and observance of a warrior, would be barricaded in some place of security, and so he would escape, while any slaughter or dispersion that took place might be reported as of the followers of Absalom. But the most dexterous and shrewd part of this advice was the proposal to make a general levy of all Israel to be commanded in person by Absalom—thus presenting him with a picture of alluring magnificence and glory, mixed up with such an assurance of success as completely carried the acquiescence of this ambitious and wicked prince. Hushai's advice was the proximate cause of his ruin; but let us not overlook that it was so appointed by Him who is the Cause of causes.

15-29.—Hushai, as if apprehensive that his advice might not be followed, sends off to David to be prepared for the worst. He bids him speedily pass over Jordan. It is interesting to mark the geographical track of every movement recorded in Scripture; and to learn how the incidental notices, as "of the plains in the wilderness," tally with the descriptions of travellers. En-rogel is in the immediate environs of Jerusalem, S.S.W., and on the brook Kidron. Bahurim again is the place where Shimei cursed David, after he had passed the ridge of Olivet. The reason given by the messengers to David for his passing instantly over Jordan, was Ahithophel's counsel—arguing,

therefore, that it might still be put into execution. That counsel, however, was not followed, and the mortified politician and statesman, under the agony of his disappointment—perhaps the chagrin of wounded vanity—went and hanged himself.... Joab went with David; and Absalom made Amasa captain in his place, who, as his mother was the sister of Zeruiah, must have also been David's niece. We read of Machir in 2 Sam. ix. 4. So David was not friendless on the east of Jordan; and one admires the generous hospitality of his benefactors there.... It does not appear that Hushai's counsel was fully followed after all—at least we do not read of a universal muster of Israel, ere Absalom pitched in the land of Gilead, though this, it is said, was done by *Israel* and Absalom.

2 Samuel xviii. 1-8.—There must after all have been a goodly number of followers with David. His proposal to go with them in person to the battle, was met by the argument that the enemy would all set on him for his destruction, on which they were now intent, and which would please them more than the defeat, whether by flight or slaughter, of their whole army.... It is an affecting exhibition which he makes of his parental tenderness—when he charges the generals to deal gently with Absalom, and that " for my sake." The city, to all appearance, in which David remained, was Mahanaim, in the tribe of Gad, though the place where the battle was fought is called the wood of Ephraim—perhaps from some exploit of that tribe in this territory on the occasion of former wars. The military skill, after all, was on the side of David; and, accordingly, he gained on that day a complete, and, to all appearance, an easy victory.

9-18.—One is pleased with the fidelity of David's subjects, and the respect they had for his will; and Joab's stern and resolved hardihood is in broad contrast with this. His deed must have gone deeply into the king's heart; and indeed the revolt which was awakened there abode with him till death, as is obvious from his charge to Solomon. Yet there may have been regard both to the king and to the kingdom in this act of Joab. After the death of Absalom he was for prosecuting the work of blood no further; policy no longer required it, now that the usurper was disposed of;—and he accordingly restrained the people from any further pursuit of the Israelites. From the followers of Absalom being designated Israel and Israelites, we may infer that the tribe of Judah were chiefly with David; and we may see the embryo already of the revolt and separation of the ten tribes.... There is at this day on the west side of Jerusalem what is called the tomb of Absalom.

19-33.—Joab, for some reason, declines Ahimaaz's offer to be the bearer of the news to David, but afterwards consents. Commentators try to divine the motives of these minuter arrangements and preferences—which in this instance are not very important, but the narrative of what took place is graphically rendered, both as to the runners and the expectants of their intelligence round about David. A picture could be made of this whole representation. One cannot but remark the delicacy of Ahimaaz in the delivery of his information, and how reluctant he is to speak of Absalom's fate. This was abundantly made up by the explicitness of Cushi; and one cannot but sympathize with the paternal feelings of the good old king—though his patriotism and regard for the

public weal were for the time placed by them in abeyance. Verily, he was a sorely tried man in his day. What an earnestness of fatherly affection breaks forth in these exclamations!

2 Samuel xix. 1-8.—One can enter into the feelings of the people on hearing of the king's grief, and also into the consequent anger and vexation of Joab. It is a striking exhibition which they make, and proves strongly their regard and respect for David. But, on the other hand, it strongly demonstrates the influence of Joab in the army; and so in all likelihood the great controlling power he had with the king. It is thus that he could not only remonstrate with the monarch, but even threaten him, and so as that David had to give way. We doubt not that this would confirm still more the deep and settled hatred of the king for this the most formidable of all his royal establishment. Joab could not have spoken so unless he had felt that he was backed by the feeling of the soldiery, among whom it is likely that his qualities as a warrior, and perhaps being an indulgent general to them, made him highly popular.

February, 1844.

9-23.—It would appear that the king tarried for some time on the east side of Jordan—uncertain, probably, to what extent the rebellion had gone, and in how far it was safe to adventure himself among his subjects. It must have proceeded a very great way, seeing that all the people throughout all the tribes are represented as saying, "we anointed Absalom over us." They sent him a message of invitation to return; and we see the distinction now brought palpably out between Judah and the rest of

Israel in the counter-message of David to his own tribe. He could not have dared to dispost Joab in the season of his adversity, but we see now, when he feels his returning strength, how he manifests his strong desire to get rid of a servant who had so lorded it over him. His success was soon followed up by a universal popularity; and by numerous adhesions on the part even of his bitterest enemies—as Shimei, who came and humbled himself before him. The sons of Zeruiah again interposed their advice to make away with him: but were again met with the same rebuff as on the former similar occasions, and with all the greater confidence, doubtless, that he now knew himself to be firmly established in the kingdom of Israel.

24-30.—Surely what is here said of Mephibosheth's habits so long as king David was an outcast from Jerusalem, bespeaks a real grief on his part at the misfortunes of his patron. One cannot therefore justify the award of David, or know well how to explain it. He first remonstrates with Mephibosheth; but seems not to have altogether believed his defence, neither to have altogether misbelieved Ziba's accusation. If he could not spare time for a further hearing of the case, he should not so hurriedly have given his decision; for if by dividing the land he only meant a restoration to the old arrangement, whereby Mephibosheth should own and Ziba should farm it, it was hard that the innocent Mephibosheth should be saddled with a tenant who had so injured and calumniated him But if by dividing it be meant that Ziba should share with him in the property, this was still worse. At all events, Mephibosheth conducts himself with great moderation and humility, while David can hardly be said to act up to the professions which he made to Jonathan. Perhaps he was

in the humour of forgiving all around, in which case I should like if he had only restored matters between Ziba and his master to their old footing, making the one no better and the other no worse than before.

31-43.—The next interview here recorded is of a more pleasing character—with good old Barzillai, a man of great age and great possessions. He withstood the king's invitation, but sent his servant Chimham instead. The most interesting part of his respectful apology is the wish he expresses to be buried by the grave of his father and mother. The adieu between the parties is also affecting. It is to be noted that only half of the people of Israel were with David. This may be due in part to the great distance of many of their habitations—though we doubt not, from symptoms already given, that there was not among them so undivided an affection for the king as with the tribe of Judah. And the jealousy between Judah and Israel is now very apparent—proving that the seeds of the great disruption which afterwards took place were by this time germinating and rankling within them. Israel is quite sensible of the claim which superior numbers confer upon them—though Judah, it would seem, had the superiority in this war of words. The Israelites made the first demand for the king's return, and sent him the first message to that effect. Perhaps they felt some unexpressed grudge at David himself, who advised Judah of the overture from Israel, and did not move till his own tribe came to fetch him. This displeasure of theirs only broke out, however, against Judah, and not against the king himself; and they really had reason for it, so that though Judah was fiercer they may not therefore have been sounder in the argument. What the Israelites complained of was,

not that their advice had not been followed at the first, but that Judah should have interposed clandestinely and filched the honour of conducting the king away from them—a festerment this which broke out on a future day.

2 Samuel xx. 1-13.—Even now this feeling on the part of Israel came to a formidable eruption—so that every man of them, it is said, followed after Sheba, while the men of Judah kept by David.... The seclusion which he imposed upon his concubines was because of the stigma that had been put on them by Absalom. But he had to defend himself from without as well as to rectify disorders within; and he gave the requisite orders to Amasa, whom he had preferred to the chief command, over the head of Joab. On Amasa not being ready in time, David gave orders to Abishai and not to Joab, which may be regarded and perhaps was felt by that great but wicked courtier as a further disgrace upon him; and, as in former instances, he put forth both guile and cruelty in another bloody act of vengeance. Instead of having to draw his sword, which might have put Amasa on his guard, he so managed as that he might secretly pick it up from the ground, and perpetrate another foul assassination. It strikingly marks his ascendency with the soldiers that when he put to them if they both favoured Joab and were with David, all the people went after Joab in pursuit of Sheba. David and Joab so shared the affections of the army between them that neither could afford to do without the other—neither Joab to rebel against David, nor David to rid himself of Joab. But no wonder that all these grievous acts of violence should so rankle in the mind of David

that on his death-bed he denounced Joab as a man of blood.

14-26.—Sheba went through Israel beating up for more recruits, but he does not seem to have succeeded well, and shut himself up in Abel—a renowned city, and resorted to from ancient times for counsel and direction.... It is a beautiful appeal which the wise woman makes to Joab, saying, "I am one of them that are peaceable and faithful in Israel." Joab, with all his cruelties and vices, seems to have had a strong sense of patriotism; and, just as after his victory over Abner, acquiesces most promptly in the proposal to terminate this civil war: "Far be it from me that I should swallow up or destroy." His only wish is to put a stop to this insurrection by securing the author of it, and not by avenging it on the people or prolonging these ruinous dissensions in Israel. When his object was accomplished he blew a trumpet for a retreat, as he did on the former occasion, (ch. ii. 28,) and so this affair was terminated. He then returned unto the king, who it would appear could not help himself; and, overlooking his murder of Amasa, reinstated him in his old place as commander-in-chief over the host of Israel.

2 Samuel xxi. 1-14.—This is a passage of great mysteriousness as concerns the way and character of God. We have here a people punished for the sin of their monarch, and children for the sin of their parent in a way that conflicts more perhaps with our natural sense of justice than any other of the recorded examples of holy writ. I humbly acquiesce; and would adjourn this and all similar questions to the day of the revelation of hidden things. We have, no doubt, mention made of Saul's bloody house,

which seems to implicate the children in the direct guilt of that act by which Saul, with that precipitate zeal which was so peculiar to him, sought to slay the Gibeonites. This is the reason set forth by God Himself for the famine wherewith He visited the land. And when the Gibeonites were spoken with on the subject of redress, they would take no other compensation but the lives of seven of Saul's descendants—saying, that David should not have the execution of them, for that they would do this themselves. Those who were delivered up were Saul's grandsons, though called his sons, even as Mephibosheth, though his grandson, was called his son also. (ch. xix. 24.) And five of them are also called sons of Michal, though the sons of Merab, (1 Sam. xviii. 19,)—but they were brought up by Michal, and may have been adopted by her.... One sympathizes with poor Rizpah, who seems to have lodged in sackloth—perhaps in a tent of that material, and scared away the beasts and birds from the dead bodies of her sons from the beginning of harvest to the commencement of the rainy season. But let us be dumb, as it was the doing of the Lord. They were hanged before the Lord, and the Lord owned it. (verse 14.)... David seems to have been stirred up by the example of Rizpah to do honour to the remains of Saul and Jonathan.

15-22.—"Giant" might here be used generically, and these four Philistine champions be of the race of giants. David was mightily beholden to the sons of Zeruiah, though they had done much to displease him; and in this instance Abishai seems to have saved his life. It is both affecting and beautiful the reaction which this danger and narrow escape of their king had upon the people, who feared any more exposures of his person in battle, lest it should

quench the light of Israel. There is an ellipse in verse 19, as is frequent in Hebrew, and here decisively made out from 1 Chron. xx. 5, where we are expressly told that Elhanan slew the brother of Goliath, though the relationship be omitted in the original of this verse.... From these additional wars it would appear that the Philistines were still in great force, kept in check and kept under, but still very far from being utterly subdued, and still less exterminated.

2 Samuel xxii. 1-7.—This chapter supplies an obvious link between the history of David and his authorship as the great Psalmist of Israel, from whom there emanated those sacred and devotional compositions, which have proved the delight and exercise of the Church in all ages. We can see a reason for the trials of his chequered life and experience, in these the precious and abiding fruits of it. It is interesting thus to connect the book of Psalms with the direct narrative of Scripture, and to behold another of the innumerable manifestations which can be appealed to for the genuineness of both. This chapter presents us with what may be called the rough sketch of the Eighteenth Psalm. We are directly informed of its occasion—even the deliverances which David experienced from the hands of his enemies, and more especially of Saul. It opens with ascriptions of homage to God, and expressions of thankfulness, in various forms, for His great mercies. "The God of my rock." There might be something secondary and immediate, which might be the proximate cause of my safety. Nevertheless He, the Cause of causes, is the God thereof. "Worthy to be praised." Worthy in Himself, and also for His

great kindness in having heard my cry, and delivered me. "The sorrows of hell" form a parallelism to "the snares of death"—according to the customary reduplication that takes place so often in these compositions: Hell being not Gehenna, but Hades, the pit to which the dead go down—the receptacle of the dead—the grave. There are just such variations as we might expect between the Eighteenth Psalm and its first sketch, as here presented to us. "I will love Thee, O Lord my strength"—Psalm xviii. 1—is wanting here.

8-20.—We do not read of any sensible manifestations by God when He interposed for David. Yet the terms here used are such as would describe the same sort of literal descent that was made on Sinai, and as perhaps will be made in future for the deliverance from its enemies of a faithful and persecuted Church. But whether these representations be typical of what is to come, or only metaphorical, they set forth with great sublimity the majesty and power of God, and withal the promptitude of that succour which He bestows on the faithful, so as to save them at length from the hands of their cruel adversaries.—Let us betake ourselves to Him for refuge, and be confident that we are safe.... Some would apply this magnificent description to the mysterious conflict which our Saviour had with the powers of darkness, and over whom He prevailed, in the strength of the Godhead. But His experience may in some measure of its own be ours also; and let us therefore rejoice in the midst of all our straitenings, to think that a time is coming when we shall be brought into a large place.... To "prevent," in verse 19, is to "obstruct."

21-30.—What increases the disposition of commentators

to substitute Christ for David in these expressions, is the ascription of a righteousness by the Psalmist to himself. And yet, may not these expressions be adopted with perfect freedom by him who leans on the foundation of Christ's merits, and has come under the regimen of the new obedience of the Gospel? Surely there is a stiffening and a systematic orthodoxy, which conflicts practically and in effect with the Bible. There is reward under the new economy. There is a recompense there according to our righteousness. There is the testimony of a good conscience deponing to one's own Christian uprightness. There is a blessing from the Lord annexed to certain graces and characteristics of the faithful disciple. As they are to Him so is He to them. The word "unsavoury" here, and "froward" in Psalm xviii., have both the same Hebrew original.—Be a light, O Lord, to show me the way in which I should walk, and strengthen me against all the obstructions which are thereupon.

31-43.—Let me try Thy Word, which is said to be tried, and I shall not be disappointed in any of its promises, or experience aught but the perfection of optimism in the way which it points out to me. Let me ascribe all sufficiency, whether for defence or guidance, to God alone; and He will perfect that which concerns me. O teach me to maintain the Christian warfare against all the enemies of my soul, as well as to fight the battles of the Church against all its adversaries. Christ came not to send peace on earth, but a sword; and let me be valiant and successful in His cause.... "Thy gentleness hath made me great." Gentleness has its radical in a Hebrew word signifying affliction, corresponding to which there is humility and subduedness on the part of the sufferer—but

which might be thence transferred to signify meekness, and gentleness, and grace;—"I have been made great by the discipline which a kind and merciful God has laid upon me."—Give me room and liberty, O Lord, for all such desires as might conduce to the enlargement of Thy Church. Let the oppositions of ungodliness give way, but the ungodly themselves be converted. Thus may all that exalteth itself against Thee and Thy truth be subdued. May all that offendeth be put out of the way; and may the enemies of every cause that is righteous, finding every refuge and every expedient to be vain, be forced to submit themselves. Let all hostility to Thy blessed Gospel be scattered into atoms, and laid prostrate before the power of Him whom Thou hast set upon Thy holy hill in Zion.

44-51.—These closing verses expand more in style of representation, which leads the reader to imagine that a greater than David is here. Not that there is not much that is applicable to David—as his being made head of the heathen, and the people who knew him not serving him, and strangers submitting themselves to him, and their obedience *upon hearing*, and the bringing down of the people under him, and the lifting of him up on high above his enemies. These all held true to a certain extent of David, but hold true more fully and emphatically, and in a far sublimer acceptation, of David's Son; and so as to enlarge our views from the type to the Antitype—from the anointed David to his Seed for ever more, even to the great Messiah, through whom we have the sure mercies of David—to Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.

2 Samuel xxiii. 1-7.—I have the greatest value for

the mutual light which the authorship of a Scriptural writer and his direct history cast upon each other. The very title of the Sweet Psalmist of Israel, is an ancient and most valuable testimony—more valuable than any ex-scriptural testimony which connects the name of David with the book of Psalms. And what a fine testimony of their inspiration, when David says that "the Spirit of the Lord spake by me!" A Ruler should be just and equal, and diffusive of such blessings among his subjects, as the sun is of fruitfulness on the earth that is beneath him.... It is not perhaps very clear what is meant by his "house being not so with God," and His "making it not to grow" —although it may refer to the contrast between the present state of his house and family, and the splendour of its future destination, when the everlasting kingdom shall be established, of Messiah, the great Procurer and Dispenser of the sure mercies of David.—O may I experience in Him who is the power and wisdom of God unto salvation, all the blessings of His sure and well-ordered covenant!... What a pregnant and precious description this is of the scheme of salvation! He will subdue all His enemies, against whom force must be used, and their end is to be burned.

8-23.—There are things mentioned here which have no place in the direct history, and which go to prove how busy and warlike a reign was that of David. As in all rude and ancient times, the victory turns more on individual strength and prowess than on able generalship. The chiefs were the bravest and strongest men; and upon these personal qualities it was that they were chiefly signalized. Adino and his two colleagues, Eleazar and Shammah, were the first three. Eleazar seems to have

been left by his soldiers to fight the Philistines alone; and when he achieved the victory, they returned to the spoil. In like manner was Shammah left to stand alone in his glory—when the Lord by him wrought a great victory. It is questioned whether the exploits that are afterwards particularized were performed by the first or the second three. The last clause of 1 Chron. xi. 19, would seem to warrant the imagination that it was the first three. It is clear that Abishai and Benaiah belonged to the second three, of whom Abishai was the chief.

24-39.—Joab's name does not occur in this enumeration of David's valiant men—perhaps because he was head and over them all, and they were not only not on the same platform, but not even second to him. There is enough said of him already. Two brothers of Joab are included in the list, and also his armour-bearer, whom he of course greatly exceeded in rank. Perhaps his superiority elevated him so as to exclude him from this catalogue.... There are thirty-one here enumerated, down from Asahel inclusive; and these, added to the two trios spoken of before, make out thirty-seven. Two of them we know to have been already dead—Asahel and Uriah; and if the dead at the drawing up of this list amounted to seven—then we might suppose a legion of honour, consisting of the definite number thirty, and where the vacancies, when they occurred, were replaced by fresh appointments.

2 SAMUEL XXIV. 1-12.—We are simply told here that God moved David to commit a sin, which, according to the explanations of some (not needed, however, by myself for gaining my acquiescence in Scripture,) is, God leaving David to himself, so as that he was drawn and enticed

into it by his own evil affection. We do not make a difficulty of the question—wherein it is that the sinfulness of numbering the people lay—any more than we should have made a difficulty of Hezekiah's sin in showing off the vessels of the temple to the messengers from Babylon, though it had not been told us that God was angry because of the vain-glory which prompted him to this display. God seeth what man seeth not, and what may not be recorded. There are many conceivable motives which might have led David to the measure that called down upon him the displeasure, quite sufficient to account for and to justify it—as vain-glory, confidence in the arm of flesh, distrust of Him who had hitherto so signally delivered him out of all his calamities. His numbering was altogether distinct from that of Moses in Numbers xxvi., which was expressly ordered by God. The most remarkable part of this narrative is the way in which one sin meets with its moral penalty in being followed up by another sin, which is made the proximate cause of a great and calamitous physical infliction. It was because of God's anger against the previous sin of Israel, that David was left to commit another sin, the punishment of which was wreaked on the first sinners, even the people at large. David's eyes do not seem to have been opened to the enormity of what he had done, till God had spoken to him: "For when David was up in the morning," &c.

13-25.—David's conviction of the guilt into which he had fallen led him to acquiesce in the punishment that was assigned to it, however disproportionately severe it might look to the natural eye. The principle on which he chose the pestilence is an obvious and a good one. When David asked what these sheep had done, he must

not have been aware of what we are told in verse 1—that though his sin was the proximate cause of this visitation, the sin of Israel was the real though remote cause of it.... Araunah the Jebusite gave "*as* a king," because of the noble and king-like spirit of generosity by which he was actuated. Or, seeing that there is no word for *as* in the Hebrew, he himself is here intituled a king, having perhaps been king of the now-tributary Jebusites, and it may be a friend now to the Israelites, and proselyte to their faith.—O let me not give unto the Lord of that which cost me nothing! Teach me self-denial; and let Thy will and honour prevail against the bent and inclination of my own nature.

I. KINGS.

1 Kings i. 1-4.—I have always felt as if I were making a transition into a darker period when I entered on the history of the kings of Judah and Israel. There is a certain mellowness like that of morning light in the patriarchal ages, and even throughout the era of the Judges, which seems to have fled now, and is succeeded by a period altogether less inviting, and of a more repulsive character—a dark record of troubles and crimes, with greatly less to redeem it of that attractive colouring which a higher antiquity throws over the heroic and the primitive of earlier times.... David, at seventy, seems to have been greatly more borne down by the infirmities of age than most men at that time of life; but he had had more than an ordinary share both of fatigue and mental anxiety. The polygamy of these times may account for, and in so far justify the advice here given to him by his servants. It is not improbable that he married Abishag; and perhaps

this constituted the main offence of Adonijah's request to have her to wife, ch. ii. 21.

5-21.—This rebellion of Adonijah seems to be in some degree charged upon David himself, in that he must have been greatly too indulgent to him—never reproving nor questioning him for his conduct, lest it should have displeased him.... Joab is implicated in this rebellion, if it may be so called. Adonijah called all the king's sons to be with him at En-rogel, save Solomon. It is likely that he may have known of his father's purpose to appoint Solomon his successor, in which case the filial undutifulness was aggravated all the more. Nathan, before conferring with David himself, put words into the mouth of Bath-sheba, and set her beforehand upon this errand—exciting her fears, yet not beyond the occasion, both for her own life and that of her son. There seems no record of any direct promise made by David to Bath-sheba, though such were in perfect keeping with what we read of Solomon in 2 Samuel xii. 25. Bath-sheba, in following the directions of Nathan, did not forget to represent to the good old king the dangers to which she and her son would be exposed, did Adonijah reign. When the king is spoken of as very old, we must only understand that he was very much borne down by the infirmities of age.

22-31.—There is something even in the minuter traits of this narrative, which suggests particulars of place and manner that are far from uninteresting. One can figure Nathan first in an ante-chamber, then announced by the servants, then called to the inner apartment where David was, then entering with all the state and ceremonial which are observed in the palaces of modern days. He confirms the previous narration of Bath-sheba, who must

have retired from the royal presence on the approach of Nathan, but who was still without, and at a call. Well might David, on the retrospect of a history so full as his was of trials and reverses, speak of God as He who had redeemed His soul out of all distress. It is well to mark the evangelical term here employed by him, as if affixing thereby the proper designation to that which had been done for a soul so guilty as in his Psalms he confesses himself to be. We learn directly and distinctly from his own mouth in what he said to Bath-sheba, that the promise had been made to her under the sanction of an oath, in behalf of Solomon's succession to the throne—an appointment this which lay, it would seem, in these days, at the disposal of the reigning monarch.

32-40.—David forthwith proceeds from the reiteration of his promise to the execution of it. He calls for his principal friends who abode faithful to him, and among these Zadok, who, along with Abiathar, is presented to us in 2 Samuel xx. 25, as one of the two priests—Abiathar having gone over to Adonijah. Benaiah, again, was over the Cherethites and Pelethites. (2 Sam. xx. 23.) . . . Gihon, where Solomon was anointed and proclaimed king, is on the west side of Jerusalem—whereas En-rogel, where Adonijah and his company of adherents were, is on the south-east side of it. There seems, however, to have been a much larger popular attendance on Solomon than on Adonijah; and the circumstance of his riding on David's mule, would add credit and confirmation to the report that he had been selected by his father to succeed him in the kingdom. Zadok, too, was probably of higher authority than Abiathar, being named before him in

2 Samuel xx. 25. And, accordingly, all the people said, God save King Solomon, and followed him rejoicing.

41-53.—We recognise Jonathan, the son of Abiathar, as having been a good man and true on the occasion of Absalom's rebellion. He gives a very particular detail of what had taken place on the other side of the city, and in the city itself; and no wonder that Adonijah and his guests were appalled by it. The effect on Adonijah, more especially, was such as might have been expected.... The altar seems to have been a place of refuge, (Ex. xxi. 14,) the place whither men fled from their apprehended execution, but whence they were taken—even for capital punishment, in certain cases of enormity which could not be passed over.... It is not said that Solomon swears impunity to Adonijah. He suspends the matter on his future good behaviour, and promises him security on the condition that he shall not fall into wickedness. One can image the look, and feeling, and manner, wherewith Solomon dismissed him from his presence: "Go about your business."

1 Kings ii. 1-11.—This is a very pregnant passage, and might give rise to many observations. "The way of all the earth" is a truly emphatic and now proverbial expression. The charge—to be strong—reminds one of the apostolic direction to quit us like men, and be strong. There cannot well be figured a more impressive scene than that of David giving forth his last words upon his death-bed, though it wants the mellowness and antiquarian light, softened as if by distance, through which we look on the death-bed of the patriarch Jacob. David's charge to Solomon is in the first sentence of it truly

solemn and powerful. One feels interested by his reference to the law of Moses—that law which, as appears in the Psalms, was the frequent study and meditation of this great monarch. His fell denunciations on Joab and Shimei have often revolted me; but this was because I viewed them as the effusions of a vindictive spirit. David may have uttered them as a prophet, and so have pronounced on these his enemies the sentence of God against them. Or as a king, and so, for sound reasons of state, have warned Solomon of the necessity to rid himself of men dangerous to the commonwealth. The reference he makes to the wisdom of Solomon gives countenance to this idea, and the more that Joab was so recently involved in the guilt of rebellion. At the same time, his counterpart charge respecting Barzillai leads one to suspect that, as there was personal gratitude in his case, there may have been personal resentment in the others. Nor can we very clearly account for his charge concerning Shimei, which seems a violation of promise, if not in the letter yet the spirit of it.... Thus terminates the history of David—a Scriptural magnate of the first order—and in whose person the Warrior, and Monarch, and Psalmist, form an unrivalled combination.

11-25.—The question of Bath-sheba to Adonijah implies an apprehension or want of security on her part. And certain it is that his speech to her betrays the consciousness of a certain claim to the monarchy, which so far justifies the construction that Solomon put on the request of which he made Bath-sheba the bearer. This may in part account for the stern sentence of the monarch against his own brother, which I must confess revolts me. It may be alleged further in mitigation, that Solomon

suspended his future safety on his good behaviour—saying, that "if wickedness were found in him he should die;" (ch. i. 52,) and that there was great wickedness in the proposal he made of having Abishag to wife—she having been the wife of his father, and such marriages having been declared incestuous, or at least forbidden by the law. (Lev. xviii. 8.) It is interesting to mark the state and ceremonial of the interview between Solomon and his mother. There may have been sound policy in the determination he came to respecting Adonijah; but I cannot help a certain recoil from the barbarity of the sentence.

26-35.—The purposes and predictions of God, as well as His righteous judgments, are so much mixed up with these executions, as to take from the revolt towards Solomon, that we might otherwise feel because of them. Abiathar was a descendant of Eli, and suffered less than he deserved, though up to the measure of the prophecy. (1 Samuel ii. 30.) The execution of Joab was still more clearly a judicial act. He had defiled the land by the blood of his own murders, and from which, in virtue of his own power and formidableness to David, it never had been cleansed during all the life of that monarch. Nothing can be more explicit and authoritative than the law of God on this subject, as laid down in Numb. xxxv., or more peremptory than the saying of verse 33—that "the land cannot be cleansed of the blood that is shed therein, but by the blood of him that shed it." And so the cruel and perfidious murders of Abner and Amasa are made to return on the head of the perpetrator. In extending the visitation downward to the seed of Joab we have one of the many specimens of a principle which bears an undoubted and most important part in the methods of the

Divine administration. The counterpart specimen of hereditary blessing will yet be realized in full on the seed of David. We cannot take leave of Joab, with whom we have held intercourse for so many days, without recording the interest that we have felt in one who had all the ruder characteristics of the primitive and the barbarous heroism, and these set forth on the sacred page in very bold and graphic delineation. Though a courtier, he had his country-seat, it would seem—and in the wilderness—a congenial place for a roving, and, for aught we know, a romantic bandit, or leader of banditti.

March, 1844.

36-46.—There are things in this narrative still more indigestible by nature than before. David's promise to Shimei obligated only himself to spare him, and by his death Solomon was set free to deal with him as a capital offender. By confining him to Jerusalem he kept him more under guardianship than if he had gone at large. But the sin of Shimei stuck to him; and in the providence of God he was led to violate the condition on which his personal safety had been guaranteed; and so we have in his death another manifestation of the peculiar Theocracy of these days, upheld by temporal sanctions, though often executed at long intervals after the crime had been perpetrated. This was illustrated in both the cases of Joab and Shemei—though at the same time it also gives the aspect of something very stern—we had almost said savage, both to David and Solomon, for the parts which they respectively had in the narrative of this chapter, that might well be denominated a record of blood. Benaiah seems to have been the great executioner, though perhaps only in the capacity of a commander, as he was

now chief captain of the forces, and by the hands of those to whom he gave the orders. In connexion with these dread severities we read that Solomon was established in his kingdom; and indeed his seems to be a stronger government than ever David's was.

1 KINGS III. 1-14.—It seems a blemish in the history of Solomon that he should have married out of his own nation; and another blemish that, like the people, he sacrificed and burnt incense in high places—it being in opposition to the law. (Deut. xii. 5, 6.) He should have kept by the ark and then by the temple; and so this is held an exception to his walking in the statutes of David his father. And yet there was a toleration from on high for these deficiencies—another specimen of what I have already remarked on as a progressive morality—a gradual building up of the prescribed discipleship to higher and higher degrees of perfection, insomuch that what was permitted or winked at in earlier times, as polygamy, for example, was afterwards laid under strictest prohibition. Accordingly Solomon, notwithstanding his defect, is accredited for the general religiousness of his character in that he loved the Lord; and even when he went to sacrifice at the great high place in Gibeon was he countenanced by the visitation of God in a dream—a truly notable passage in the history of this monarch; and whence we may learn that by seeking first the things which are best, other good things, though inferior to these, will be added to us.

15-28.—When he returned to Jerusalem he offered more legitimate sacrifices than before—standing as he then did before the ark of the covenant of the Lord....

There is all the interest of a romance in the story of this passage; and it must have told powerfully on the feelings of the children of Israel. One can well imagine the gossipry it would give rise to throughout the families, and more especially among the wives in the families of the land. There is such a predisposition in favour of rank and station that marvellously little serves to awaken our admiration of the sayings or doings of a monarch, if at all on the side of goodness—for it seems to have required no very profound wisdom to prompt such a judgment as Solomon here gave. But as a reality, and being in itself a very affecting scene, it was strongly fitted to strike and impress; and one is pleased with the popular reverence which superior mental powers are sure to awaken.

1 Kings iv. 1-19.—We have here an account of Solomon's kingly establishments—in the civil and military and commissariat and ecclesiastical and fiscal departments. The officers mentioned in verse 4, are placed before us in detail throughout the succeeding verses. They were purveyors, not for the army as in our modern commissariats, but for the king's household. They were of sufficient consideration for two of them to have married daughters of the king. They were distributed all over the land, and the statement of their various localities magnifies our impression of the wealth and abundance that flowed in upon the sovereign. The officers are chiefly, though not all, mentioned by their surnames, Ben-hur, Ben-dekar, &c. Of these the son of Geber and the son of Iddo had charge of northern districts in Gilead—yet Geber seems to have had charge of the whole of Gilead—the other two being probably subordinate to him, and on which

account it may be that he, Geber, the father of one of these two, is said to have been the only officer which was in the land.

20-25.—This is a most alluring picture of the state of Israel in these days. It might be called the Augustan age of their nation—the age of greatest prosperity and peace, yet with all the efflorescence of that most brilliant period in their annals, the age, like that of Augustus in Rome, of commencing degeneracy. David and Samuel were to Solomon what the older Romans were even to the best of Rome's imperial sovereigns; and in respect even to sacred literature, the Psalms occupy a far higher and more prominent place in the Bible than do the Proverbs and other works of Solomon. It is not said that Solomon's kingdom reached to the Euphrates; but all the kingdoms between his own and the Euphrates were tributary and subservient to him. The daily consumption here recorded indicates a prodigious court and immense household establishment. But far the most interesting feature in this description is the peace and plenty and safety enjoyed by the general population—each man under his own vine and his own fig-tree.

26-34.—Then follows the description of Solomon's military force; and we are further told of the officers who provided not only for Solomon's house but also for his table—where from the expression "all that came," we may infer a very extensive hospitality. The provender for the horses and dromedaries is not omitted; and all seems to have been conducted in the most perfect order. But the highest part of this account is of Solomon's mental endowments. Largeness of heart may denote either the extent of his receptive or communicative powers. It

is a remarkable comparison of these, to the sand on the sea-shore. Of Heman mention is made in 1 Chron. xv. 19; xxv. 5. I am not aware of the other wise men here spoken of being recorded anywhere else than in this place. Solomon was a moralist and a botanist and a zoologist and a poet. The works ascribed to him here far exceed those of his which have come down to us—probably because not inspired; for it is not clear that all, even the written products of inspiration have been transmitted to our own times. It is a striking testimony to the reverence in which mental endowments are held, that they came from all places to hear the wisdom of Solomon.

1 Kings v.—We are here told incidentally that Hiram, king of Tyre, had borne a great affection, and that constantly, for David, and which prompted a message from him of kindness to Solomon. It is not said whether the reply on the part of Solomon was by Hiram's messengers or his own. It related to that great work—the temple of Jerusalem, the rearing of which forms the chief glory of Solomon's splendid and peaceful reign. The agricultural and the manufacturing states made an appropriate exchange with each other, Tyre supplying the workman's skill and labour, and Israel food probably for the workmen, but certainly for the sustenance of Hiram's household. Solomon's people could unite with Hiram's in the hewing of stones, or in the masonry of the work, but not in the hewing of timber or in the finer carpentry. The amount of labour must have been prodigious, if we may judge from the number of labourers. The remainder of the foundations at this day, as described by Robinson, bears evidence to the work done by stone-squarers, in the great stones, and

costly stones, and hewed stones, still to be seen in the substructures, which can be traced along the ground where the temple stood, and which must have been employed "to lay the foundation of the house."

1 KINGS VI. 1-10.—These chronological notices are highly valuable; and let me not forget that four hundred and eighty years make out the interval between the departure of the Israelites from Egypt and the commencement of the building of Solomon's temple. It serves greatly to authenticate all true history, when a consistency can be demonstrated between all the indications of time which accompany its narrative of events .... The cubit is a measure taken from the human body—that from the elbow downward along the arm; but it is disputed whether it stop at the wrist or is extended to the tip of the mid-finger. If to the latter, it is equal to six hand-breadths, or twenty-one inches, which makes out no great size for the body of the temple, being two hundred and five feet long and thirty-five feet broad, or only five feet broader, and two and a-half times longer, than my manse at Kilmany. Still it was an illustrious piece of architecture, from the depth and solidity of its foundations, the richness of its materials, the beauty and splendour of its ornaments, and the variety as well as extent of its outworks. I must confess that I have no taste, and little capacity, for the comprehension of its details. Let me, therefore, only notice at present the impressive circumstance of its erection being altogether noiseless.

11-22.—This special and supernatural visit to Solomon marks the religious importance of the temple, on the erection of which he had now entered. The temple may

be regarded as an expansion of the tabernacle—the *ναος*, or fane, or temple proper, being of considerably larger dimensions than the tabernacle. And if the rich and varied outworks be included as the chambers close on the body of the house, and the successive courts, it will be found that altogether there was an architectural magnificence which amply justifies the terms in which it is spoken of both by Scriptural and ex-Scriptural writers. It would add much to the effect if the porch was raised to the elevation of one hundred and twenty cubits, as is said, thus forming the tower or spire of the building. The oracle or most holy place took up one-third of the fane on the west end of it—the remaining two-thirds of the oblong being occupied with the holy place—the one being ten and the other (verse 17) forty cubits long. Some would suspend the sense between the first and last clause of the twentieth verse, thus, "Before the oracle, which was twenty cubits long, &c., the altar was covered with pure gold." This must have been the altar of incense. The height of the oracle being twenty cubits, would seem to betoken a chamber of ten cubits' height above it. Verse 21 also is variously interpreted. The partition between the holy place and the most Holy of Holies consisted in part at least of folding-doors, which may have been shut and opened with these golden chains.

23-38.—The mercy-seat, and the two smaller cherubims which sprung from it, are supposed to have been still attached to the ark of the covenant as they were in the tabernacle; but that in the temple these last were surmounted by other and larger cherubims. Their wings formed a continuous line from wall to wall, in all twenty cubits, or the breadth of the house. In point both of elaborate

workmanship and precious material, the interior of the oracle must have been a highly-finished production. Observe that the door of the temple at the south end, and which entered into the holy place, was of greater width than the inner door which entered into the oracle; and the leaves were of coarser wood, for instead of olive-trees, two doors were of fir-tree. I should understand, from verse 34, that the two doors were the halves which sprung from the opposite posts, and that the leaves were halves again of these, which folded back upon hinges—thus making four separate pieces of the whole. The inner court was for the priests. There the altar was; and its wall, which seems to have had a coping of cedar, is understood to have been so low that the people could see over it from their court to what was going on within.

The building of the temple took seven years, being from the fourth to the eleventh year of the reign of Solomon.

1 Kings vii. 1-12.—I cannot decide among the various opinions as to "the house of the forest of Lebanon." Some say, built in Lebanon; others, at Jerusalem or near it, but of wood from Lebanon. It is possible that it as well as the queen's house may have been part and parcel of the same royal buildings with Solomon's own house. I should like if ground-plans and elevations were constructed of these various fabrics in the terms of their description—though aware of its difficulty, and perhaps impossibility, from the obscureness or incompleteness of the accounts. The cedar-beams which joined the tops of the pillars had cedar above them again. What the thick beam of verse 6 is, I leave to the judgment of others. There

seems throughout to have been great state and magnificence—an impression chiefly given by the account of the throne. It is most interesting to compare the account of these large and costly stones with the architectural remains in Judea of the present day as described by travellers. The great court was similarly constructed to the inner court of the house of the Lord. (ch. vi. 36.)

13-22.—Hiram may have been a Tyrian name, as we have Hiram the king and Hiram the architect. Intermarriages with the people of other nations, it would appear, were not uncommon, though perhaps more frequently of Israelitish women with Gentile husbands—as in the case of Hiram's mother, who was of the tribe of Naphtali, with a man of Tyre. Both the Hirams are called Hurams in the book of Chronicles. The superiority of the Tyrians to the Israelites in this sort of workmanship was just what might have been expected from the relative states of the two peoples. The ornaments of network, lily-work, pomegranates, &c., on the capitals of the two pillars, must have been gravings upon them, not things hanging loose about them. These pillars seem to have stood detached on each side of the great entry, and to have been purely ornamental. Brass may signify metals of various composition, from pure copper to copper mixed with other metals of different sorts. Verse 20, "upon the other chapiter," should mean, I suppose, "*as also* upon the other chapiter." Jachin and Boaz are celebrated names.

23-26.—The brazen sea was probably the great reservoir out of which the lavers were supplied with water by stop-cocks or otherwise. The term "sea" was applied by the Hebrews to every large collection of water; and

accordingly their lakes are called seas, and the name is brought down even to water in so large a vessel as is here described. The temple-service would require a vast deal of ablution; and doubtless much of the labour of its inferior attendants would be employed in keeping up the supply. The dimensions here given furnish some data for determining what their measures of capacity were. If the brazen sea was a hemisphere of ten cubits diameter, and contained two thousand baths, we may hence know what a bath is. The dimensions, however, are given roughly and not precisely—as is evident from the diameter of the sea being stated at 10, and the circumference at 30 instead of 31.4 cubits. There is a good representation of this immense vase with its margin and supporters in the Pictorial Bible. One tradition says that it was kept full by pipes, and not by the labour of human hands. The margin being wrought with flowers of lilies, (verse 26,) explains what we read before of lily-work.

26-39.—The bases or stands—basin-stands—upon which the lavers were placed, must not have been fixtures—although ordinarily in two rows, one on each side of the house. They ran on a sort of casters, and were elaborately ornamented, as is evident from the description, which it is difficult to follow. They were probably replenished from the brazen sea; and, by the way, the wells still subsisting, according to Robinson, under the site of the temple, make it likely that the supply may have been fetched by buckets from the water underneath, as well as by pipes from water at a distance. The lavers may have been placed in the mouths of these stands, (verse 31,) just as our basins now in circular openings, while the borders are

four-square and not round. If a laver of four cubits diameter held forty baths, while the brazen sea of ten cubits held two thousand, this proves that the lavers were proportionally shallower than the sea. $4^3 : 10^3 = 64 : 1000 = 40 : 625$. But instead of only six hundred and twenty-five baths, the sea held more than three times as much It stood on the south-east of the temple.

40-51.—Here follows a sort of recapitulation of Hiram's works. There must have been a most splendid array of furniture, and a metallic lustre both within doors and without. One should like to ascertain and identify the clay ground where the brass was cast; and more especially if its materials are still to be found there—that is, the relics or scoriae of such an extensive operation as that here described. The clay furnished the moulds in which the smaller articles were cast; but the larger—as the pillars for example, could only be cast in excavations made out of the ground itself. Observe that there was but one candlestick for the tabernacle, and ten for the temple. In verse 50, the doors of the most holy are distinguished from the outer doors, or those of the temple The brass was beyond reckoning; and the chapter concludes with a separate mention of the more precious articles which had been dedicated by Solomon's father—when besides the vessels there was also much gold and silver that had not yet been formed into vessels, and which—as devoted to sacred—could not be turned to common uses; and was therefore deposited among the treasures of God's house.

1 Kings viii. 1-9.—There was an aristocracy—the elders of Israel, even in these days of high monarchical power.

The assemblage here spoken of was called together on a very great occasion—the introduction of the ark into the temple, celebrated in more Psalms than one, and especially in Psalm cxxxii.—though prospectively in that instance. It was an event accompanied with many high solemnities, and the ark with its vessels was brought into the oracle of the temple, or holy of holies. It was brought under the wing of the temple cherubims which had been already raised, but we presume with its own adhering cherubims also. The staves, no longer of use for carrying the ark, were drawn out, not wholly but partly—so as their outer extremities guided the priest to the mercy-seat over the ark. "They were not seen without" might mean that they were never seen wholly extracted and separated from the ark, but remained inserted a certain way to its ends, and continued so to the time of the drawing up of this Book. As to there being now but the tables of the law in the ark, this does not conflict with Heb. ix. 4—for the other articles, though in the ark when it was in the tabernacle, may have been taken out and placed beside the ark, or among the other treasures of the temple, on the transference of the ark thither.

10-21.—What Solomon first said was to the priests, who perhaps may have felt discomfited by the cloud which filled the house, and doubted whether it was the indication of a propitious God—whereupon they are told by the monarch that it was a genuine token of His presence, for that He dwelt in thick darkness, at least among men in their present state. Solomon afterwards turns him to the people; and I can imagine nothing more fitted than his address to bind him and them together by the tie of a common and right enthusiasm. His reputation for

wisdom, along with the piety of his present speech, would give him an immense hold on them. His narrative regarding the purpose of David his father behoved to excite in their hearts the greatest possible interest. The introduction of the ark into the temple was indeed a most solemn event, and abundantly solemnized by a direct and special countenance from Heaven. It forms as it were the commencement of a new ecclesiastical epoch—but ushered in, and so visibly sanctioned by the most palpable and impressive tokens of God's presence and approval. One likes to see the continuity of the respective periods of Jewish history kept up by these retrospective references to what went before—and more especially in that the ark still contained the identical tables of the covenant made by God with Israel, when He brought them out of Egypt.

22-30.—This is a very fine exhibition of the monarch in the face of his people. When one sees the powerful effect of a support and testimony on behalf of religion by the governing power—who would rashly or wantonly set himself in opposition to National Establishments—so as to dissociate Government from all care and duty for the religion of the people?... The great burden of Solomon's impressive prayer is the faithfulness of God, as verified by the fulfilment of His promises to David his father, and on which he pleads for a like fulfilment of the promises made to himself, or rather made to David—but respecting himself. The promise does not supersede, but rather supplies ground for prayer on which the suppliant might rest, and which he might plead with God—and which if he do in faith, he will never miss the object because of any want of faithfulness in God. It is well that at this outset of the temple services, Solomon should speak of the

universal temple of nature as inadequate to the Divine greatness, and still more the house made with human hands. It is well, too, that he should advert, not to God's keeping mercy only, but keeping *covenant* and mercy—thereby charging both himself and his people with a part and a responsibility of which they must acquit themselves before they can expect the fulfilment of it. They must take heed to their way, and the future kings must walk before God as did David. But it was a covenant that included mercy—insomuch that should they pray aright towards the temple, God would hear and forgive. The temple Solomon calls "this place," but says that Heaven is God's "dwelling-place."

31-40.—What he had just prayed for in the general, he now branches forth into so many particulars. As first, for a pure and right judgment in all those cases which were brought to the altar, or to them who there officiat . for their determination. (Deut. xvii. 8, &c.) Then on the event of defeat from enemies—that the sin which brought this on might, when confessed and turned from, be forgiven. The same on the event of famine, when proceeding from the like cause—and when followed up as before by repentance. Other visitations are spoken of, to be averted as in the other instances. In one case, the prayer of the returning penitents is supposed to be made *in* the house—in all the rest to be made *towards* the house. I believe the practice of the Israelites in prayer is to turn their faces towards Jerusalem.... That is a precious parenthesis which the king introduces when he says —"Thou, even Thou only, knowest the hearts of all the children of men."

41-53.—This prayer of Solomon breathes a spirit of

catholicity to foreigners which pure and original Judaism gets too little credit for. It seeks for an open door of privilege to all men—who are invited to look towards the temple, that all the people of the earth may recognise it as the house of God, and that they may know His name and fear Him. Besides prayer after defeat, there is also particularized here the case of prayer before battle. And, finally, there is the case of prayer on the event of captivity. Solomon entreats of God that He would have respect unto all such prayers, and pleads in argument the previous deliverances which had been wrought for the children of Israel in virtue of their relationship to God as His own peculiar people—separated by Him from all others. It is well to remark on the efficacy of all these prayers, in connexion with the attitude of those who make them, even that of looking towards Jerusalem, the place where God was rendered propitious by sacrifice; and let us, in like manner, ever look in prayer towards Him who is the minister of the true sanctuary.

54-66.—We learn only now that Solomon knelt while he uttered this most impressive prayer—after which he pronounced a blessing on the assembled congregation. There was no failure of what had been promised by the hand of Moses, though as yet far short of the promise made to Abraham. Oh, that they had had the heart which Solomon here prays for! But they continued a perverse and disobedient people, and are now scattered outcasts over the face of the earth. But the time is yet coming when, through them, all the people of the earth shall know the true God, and that there is none else.

The whole was followed up with sacrifices and a feast. The altar did not suffice for the multitude of the offering;

and so the middle of the court was set apart for the occasion. There was an immense gathering, from the mouth of the Orontes to that of the east branch of the Nile. The general effect is most instructive as to the influence of religion among the great on the general heart of the community. Never is the spirit of a country in a more happy and healthful mood than when high and low are actuated by a common enthusiasm in behalf of what is good—as here when the people blessed the king, and went joyful and glad of heart unto their tents.

1 Kings ix. 1-9.—We have here both the absolute and the conditional in the promises of God for Israel—the one in the terms of the Abrahamic, the other in the terms of the Sinaitic covenant. God has put His name, and that for ever, on Jerusalem; and his eyes and his heart shall be there perpetually—a promise which neither the law nor the actual disobedience of the Israelites to the law can possibly disannul. Had they proved faithful to God there would have been no casting off—no expulsion of them from the inheritance which they had gotten—no desolation of their land, or destruction of their magnificent temple. But all these inflictions have come upon them because they have sinned; and for many centuries have the Jews been a hissing and a by-word to all people. But the time of their repentance and restoration is coming, when they shall prove what God said to Abram—They should be a blessing to all the families of the earth.

10-28.—There have been many interpretations of Cabul, into which we shall not enter. The cities which displeased Hiram are probably the same which he restored to Solomon, (2 Chron. viii. 2,) by a fair and friendly negotiation, it is

likely—for they seem to have been on good terms afterwards. (verse 27.) Hiram sent gold and other things to Solomon, but in the way of exchange for provisions, (verse 9,) and also for these cities. The levy afterwards spoken of may have been that raised from the heathen still in the land. (verse 20.) The reason Solomon required so much money was the number of erections he had to make.... Millo may have been begun by David. (2 Sam. v. 9.) It is understood to have been a town-house, erected on or close to a bridge between Mount Moriah, where the temple stood, and Mount Zion, or the place of the royal residence. He had to rebuild the town of Gezer, which his father-in-law had taken and burnt and made over to him.... Tadmore in the wilderness is a truly interesting place, as being the same with Palmyra.... It is not a levy of money from these remaining heathen, but of bond-service that is spoken of here. It is not unlikely, however, that they may have at least been more exacted upon for revenue, too, than the children of Israel, who were not made bondmen.... There is with me a difficulty in regard to the site of the queen's house. Was it not contiguous to Solomon's? and did not he reside in the city of David? See Brown's Jewish Antiquities for this.... The two altars, in verse 25, are, one the altar before the temple, the other the altar in the temple before the Lord—the altar of incense. He did not burn the incense himself, but the priest of course did it for him.... Eloth is believed to have been in the gulf of Akaba. There is the hypothesis of a two-fold Ophir, one Indian, and the other nearer. It should have been noticed that the twenty years, of verse 10, harmonize with the seven years which the temple, and the thirteen which his own house took in building.

1 Kings x. 1-17.—This is a celebrated passage in Scripture history, and referred to by the Saviour. A singular errand of Sheba's queen—to prove Solomon with hard questions,—a taste for puzzles in these days, marking the infancy of the world's intellect. But this is taking too low a view of it. She came "to hear the wisdom of Solomon." (Matt. xii. 42.) She was queen of the south and came from "the uttermost parts of the earth"—queen, perhaps, on the coast of Arabia, or it may be in Africa. Her spices were the products of a southern country. The wisdom and splendour of Solomon so affected her that she stood in dumb astonishment for a time, till at length she gave vent to her admiration in a high strain of benediction and compliment.... The almug trees are probably introduced here as having been admired in a special manner by the queen of Sheba.... It makes a good sense for verse 13, that Solomon gave her whatever she asked, over and above what he was wont to give in royal presents on similar occasions, or when gifts and courtesies were exchanged between monarchs. There is a further enumeration of his wealth and grandeur in the succeeding verses.... A target or sort of buckler. It should have been mentioned that David predicted of Solomon that to him should be given of the gold of Sheba.

18-29.—All this magnificence must have been very imposing. The material of his throne, as being of ivory, or elephants' teeth, argues an extensive traffic with the countries which abounded in that article. The house of the forest of Lebanon seems to have been made a special repository of all that was most rich and valuable. Something might be inferred from the imports, what or whereabout the countries were from which they came. The

Tharshish here spoken of should, on this principle, be somewhere on the Indian Ocean. The word generically signifies the sea; and so may have been applied to more seaward countries than one—as to one in Africa or India, or to one in the Mediterranean, as Spain. In this record of great abundance and trade, we read of Egypt as a great breeding country for horses, to which circumstance there are many allusions in Scripture.... The concluding verse is obscure. The most satisfactory meaning of it to myself is, that in like manner as horses were brought from Egypt for Solomon, so were they brought thence also for the kings of the Hittites and Syrians, but by means of the Israelites, who either traded between the selling and buying countries themselves, or who, by virtue of a transit-duty through their country, may have had a benefit from the traffic, and perhaps also a hand in it.

1 KINGS XI. 1-13.—We now enter on the dark region of the history of the children of Israel, and which continues so to this day—though illumed and alleviated at times by intervals of a reigning piety and righteousness. What a melancholy—we could say, what a monstrous defection was this of Solomon—corrupted by the excess of his prosperity; and to such a degree as hardened him against all the manifestations and lessons of other days! Yet it is not the polygamy which seems to be denounced here, but the marriage with idolaters, and the consequent idolatry. Verily, his heart was turned away, and was far from perfect with God. He indeed broke the covenant which, had it been kept, would have been fulfilled up to the original terms of it with Abraham; but which, because fallen short of, limited the territory of Israel far within the limits of

the land of promise; and which, because now so grossly violated, rent asunder the territory—till, after ages of aggravated rebellion, all the descendants of Jacob were scattered abroad, and for nearly two thousand years have wandered a nation of outcasts through the world.—Let us never cease to pray for their restoration; and give God no rest till the sure mercies of David are fulfilled, in Jerusalem becoming a universal blessing and praise upon the earth!

April, 1844.

14-25.—But chastisements were also inflicted on Solomon himself, as well as on his posterity. Hadad was of the royal family of Edom. What awful desolations accompanied these wars of old! No wonder, truly, that Hadad should have been an adversary to Israel. It is worthy of being observed how fragments of by-gone history—as in verses 15 and 16—are recovered, as it were for the sake of elucidating some of its future passages. There is altogether a romance in this narrative of Hadad's boyhood and youth, and one likes to be admitted by such a narrative into the affairs of the courts and royal families of other times. The patriotic aspiration of Hadad—or if not patriotic, the kingly ambition—to be reinstated in his paternal dominions, one can most thoroughly sympathize with—nor be at a loss to comprehend his resolution to quit the palace of Pharaoh, notwithstanding all the kindness and affection which he had met with under its hospitable roof. Pharaoh and he being now married to sisters was a bond of alliance betwixt them.

Beside Hadad there was Rezon, a fugitive from his master in Zobah, and who set up for himself in a sort of guerilla capacity—and so obtained a great ascendant over

the north of Syria, where both Zobah and Damascus are —the former, however, greatly to the northward.

26-40.—But a far more formidable, and eventually a far more effectual, adversary to the house of David, arose in the person of Jeroboam—called to be an enemy by a special designation from Heaven. An Ephrathite, it may be, from being of the tribe of Ephraim.... Ten tribes should have left two, but Simeon was so incorporated with Judah as to be regarded one with it; and though Benjamin was contiguous to Judah, and much under its influence, yet some of its towns were of the secession. The separation, however, was not to take place till after the death of Solomon; and meanwhile, Jeroboam received the same charge of obedience, and the same conditional promise that wont to be given, as forming the tenure of the covenant between God and Israel.... It is a striking clause when after God had said that he would afflict the house of David, He adds, *but not for ever.* Does not this point to the future restoration of David's house—and to a latter-day glory, when the children of Abraham shall prove a blessing to all the families of the earth?... The Shishak who harboured Jeroboam must have been different from the Pharaoh who harboured Hadad. Was this Pharaoh the father-in-law of Solomon?

41-43.—This book of the Acts of Solomon must have been a distinct and particular book—it may be inspired; for why may not inspired writings have been permitted to disappear, after having served their purpose, as well as that many inspired sayings should now be forgotten?... There has been a great controversy on the question of Solomon's salvation. It is certainly mysterious that one inspired of God, and the author of some of our canonical

books, should be a cast-away; but Paul intimates the possibility of himself becoming so, and to avert the alternative kept his body under subjection, which Solomon did not, and so may have incurred the doom of the reprobate. Balaam was inspired, and yet died not the death of the righteous, but of the wicked; and so this backsliding monarch, though he spake with the tongues of men and angels, and had the gift of prophecy, and understood all mysteries and all knowledge, yet may have wanted that without which he was nothing; and, for aught we know, wanted it irrecoverably and for ever.

1 Kings xii. 1-11.—We now enter upon what I have ever felt to be the repulsive and dark region of Jewish history. There seems to have been rebellion in the popular mind at the time of Solomon's death, though the ostensible object at the first was redress of grievance.... It seems uncertain whether Jeroboam returned from Egypt in consequence of the people's message, or if this message was sent to him after his return. At all events, he came after the way had been made clear for him, and headed the great national assemblage at Shechem, between mounts Ebal and Gerizim, and in the tribe of Ephraim—a central place for the recusant tribes. Their separation was a matter of absolute prophecy, yet brought about on the stepping-stones of a conditional and human agency—the folly and waywardness of Rehoboam and his youthful counsellors. The splendour of a monarchy is upheld at the expense of the people; and in the prosperity of Solomon's reign we may read the amount of his levies and exactions, both in the way of tribute and service. It may not have been an unreal complaint, therefore, on the part

of the congregation, but a complaint grounded on an actual sense and experience of oppression.

12-20.—Here it is expressly said that the separation hung proximately on the refusal of Rehoboam, who "hearkened not unto the people"—yet efficiently on God, for it is also said—"the cause was from the Lord, that He might perform His saying, which the Lord spake by Ahijah."—Let us not stop short, then, at second and sensible causes, but look up to Him who is the Cause of causes, and who avails Himself of human as well as of all other agency, which in His hand is altogether instrumental and subservient.... Israel was ripening for this revolt ever since the days of Saul; and we have occasional outbreakings of its spirit during the reigns both of David and Solomon. ... It is not said where it was that Adoram suffered from the violence of the people. It may have been in or near to Shechem—where Rehoboam, by the last accounts of him was, and from which place he seems to have fled from the popular tumult to Jerusalem.

21-33.—Rehoboam evinced cowardice in flying from Shechem to Jerusalem. Whether this had any part in his desisting from war with Israel at the bidding of the prophet, we cannot say. There may have been a principle of deference in it to the will of God.

Now follows the commencement of the sad history of Israel's kings. Jeroboam made Shechem the capital of Israel. His calculation as to the effect of a resort to Jerusalem on the popular habit and affections of his people, is a testimony to the wisdom of the religious and temple economy. It also proves the exceeding proneness to idolatry in these days; and how indispensable the ordained observances of the law were for the preservation

of the people from this sore degeneracy. The marvel is, that the people so readily coalesced with this proposal of their king. The people went to one or other, to the one at Beth-el, or even so far as Dan. To carry the desecration still further, he instituted an illegitimate priesthood even of the meanest of the people; and to strengthen the attraction still more, so as to make sure of a diversion from Jerusalem, he instituted an annual feast and convocation at Beth-el. So speedily did this wicked prince renounce the charge of the prophet who first told him of his preferment.

1 Kings xiii. 1-10.—God still kept by Israel in the way of supernatural converse from Heaven, notwithstanding its idolatries; and we can have no doubt that a remnant of the godly was kept up in consequence. The message to Jeroboam, and prophecy and miracles that took place on the occasion, would have their impression upon others, though thrown away upon him. The sign given forth was fulfilled not before the king's act of disobedience, so as to prevent it—but afterwards, so as to punish it; and while it convinced some, it would aggravate at least the condemnation of his continued rebellion against the true God. His feelings seem to have been favourably worked upon by the restoration of his hand—insomuch that he was visited with a sense of kindness to the prophet, even as after the miraculous infliction he was brought to a humble sense of dependence on God. But all this was momentary; and he soon lapsed again, as did the Israelites of old, in the face of most remarkable and recent manifestations.... The man of God withstood the king's invitation, and so far weathered the trial of his

obedience that he should neither eat nor drink while upon the errand that God had sent him.

11-22.—This is a very odd and inexplicable story, and proves that God's methods of discipline and of administration are often beyond the reach of our understanding. The prophet had nobly withstood the fascinations of royal hospitality, but gave way to the authority of a prophet, who turned out to be a lying prophet, and who, to aggravate still more the enormity of his conduct, made the great God the subject of a falsehood—alleging a message from Him, for the cruel and deceitful invitation which he gave his poor victim. Yet we read of no punishment laid upon this deceiver, though the message which God gave him at his own table, and by which he denounced upon his guest the evil consequence of his simplicity in trusting him, should have stung him to the heart. There are several incomprehensible things in this narrative—as that the lying prophet should have been made the organ of God's communication. As to the poor sufferer, the Searcher of hearts, who knows all the influences which are at work there, and can balance them with perfect accuracy—He may have discerned such a prevalence of appetency over duty, as led the prophet from Judah to an unrighteous compliance with an alleged order from God, which at best came to him at second hand, and this in the face of the original charge received direct by himself from the Supreme Governor of men, who sees infinitely further than we scrutinize. And hence, all that is mysterious both in this history and that of Balaam.

23-34.—The lion must have been arrested by miracle, after it had fulfilled its destined work of accomplishing the sad prediction which had been uttered against the

prophet from Judah.... The deportment of his deceiver is most extraordinary. There is not the semblance of contrition for his own misconduct, yet the utmost appearance of grief and wounded affection for the victim whom he had so cruelly misled—nay, even of religious sympathy with the message he delivered to Jeroboam—and these friendly sentiments carried so far, that he gave a charge to be buried in the same grave with the man whom he himself had brought to an untimely end.—There is a lesson to be gathered from this narrative, which is—never to let any plausibilities on the side of sense and natural inclination, to overbear the influence of a clearly commanded duty.

Jeroboam remained incorrigible—persisting in his old ways, and exemplifying the collective character of his nation, who in the face of most impressive demonstrations lapsed again and again into rebellion, till at last—though not as this wicked king, it is to be hoped, conclusively and for ever—swept off from the land of their inheritance.

1 Kings xiv. 1-6.—It is a remarkable state of mind and conscience here presented to us in the case of Jeroboam—an obstinate rebel, yet having the conviction withal that Ahijah, who had warned him against idolatry when he first announced the preferment that was awaiting him, was indeed a preternaturally gifted personage.... One can understand his aversion that his wife, whom he sent as a messenger to the prophet, should be known by him. It argues a shame and a consciousness on the part of Jeroboam, but at the same time a strange ambiguity of sentiment regarding Ahijah, in that he divines things future, and could tell what was to become of his son,

but could not divine things present, and tell who his wife was. Jeroboam would, also, it is probable, like her to be disguised from his own household, and from others on the journey to Shiloh.... There is something picturesque and affecting and venerable in the representation here given of the old prophet. His revelation of Jeroboam's wife to herself was a testimony to her of the true God. Verily, though Israel had grievously rebelled, God did not leave Himself without a witness, but gave such manifestations as should have reclaimed them, but as they did not, served all the more to aggravate their doom.

7-20.—The prophet now opens upon her the heavy tidings wherewith he was charged. It is a speech which has several most instructive points in it—as the wholesale approbation of David, notwithstanding certain grievous defections, for which however he was chastened by his loving Father, who recognised his spots to be different from the spots of those who are not His children. Again we have God's partial and *pro tanto* approbation of Abijah, in that he had " some good things in him toward the Lord God of Israel." Our Saviour tells us, that he who giveth a cup of cold water to a disciple shall not lose his reward. Our controversial orthodoxy has deprived us too much of the comfort of what is good in us, and of the confidence that our labour in the Lord shall not be in vain. It should further be remarked what the gross transgressions were by which Israel was held to have broken the covenant and so forfeited their land—such enormous idolatries as those of Jeroboam and other wicked kings. Their temporal privileges would have been secured and continued with them, had they kept by the literal conformities of their own ritual and ruder dispensation—whereas

a more refined and spiritual obedience is associated with the blessings of our better covenant and higher economy. ... There is a difficulty in the last clause of verse 14—" But what?" Let me not speak of that day as a distant futurity—for even now the sentence is taking effect, and the beginning of sorrows to the house of Jeroboam, in the immediate cutting off of the most hopeful member of his family.

21-31.—The history alternates from that of Judah to that of Israel, in the two books of Kings; while in the two books of the Chronicles we have a regular history of Judah alone. The degeneracy proceeded very fast in Judah also, which exemplified indeed that wretched process of which we have the description in the first chapter of the Romans. This misconduct of theirs was soon followed up by temporal judgments; nor are we to wonder that the riches of the temple, as left by Solomon, should have tempted the cupidity of enemies who made an easy prey of them, when in the hands of successors deserted by God.... The book of the Chronicles of the kings of Judah may have been far more copious than our present books of Chronicles, which in all probability make up but a digest of the former. The book of the Chronicles of the kings of Israel, again, in which the acts of Jeroboam were recorded, seems to have left no distinct relict or representative behind it—though it may have furnished materials to the Israelitish part of the history in the book of Kings. ... Rehoboam's mother was one of Solomon's strange wives, an Ammonitess, and may have been instrumental in originating and fostering the idolatrous tendencies of her son.

1 Kings xv. 1-8.—The history of Judah is continued.

He was the evil son of an evil father—yet was the monarchy kept up and transmitted in his own family, for the sake of his ancestor David. The lamp, in verse 4, given to Abijam, is the image employed in other places where the promise was made of a perpetual succession in the house of David, as in ch. xi. 36; 2 Kings viii. 19; and 2 Chron. xxi. 7. By the lamp being given to him, it is signified that his family should not be extinguished or cast down from its royal honours, but that he should set up his son after him, who proved a righteous king—thus establishing the race in Jerusalem .... "Abishalom" is "Absalom," as appears from 2 Chron. xi. 21 .... There is only one exception taken to David's uprightness, though there were other exceptions; but the one singled out was the most enormous of them all.... The war which lasted all the days of Rehoboam, between him and Jeroboam, was perpetuated by Abijam, who had a short and wicked reign. But the kingdom was not on that account taken from his household, as was that of Jeroboam, who had no tenure of a promise to hold by.

9-24.—It is remarked that generally the good kings of Judah had much longer reigns than the bad kings. Some make Maachah the grandmother of Asa, and some make her a younger sister of his grandmother of the same name or surname. The righteous doings of Asa consisted in the removal of such things and practices as show to what an extent of idolatry and abomination the kingdom had gone. It is striking to observe that though his acts were not perfect, in that he removed not the high places, still his heart is said to be perfect. There may have been obstacles to the full accomplishment of his righteous desires, for which God, who knoweth our frame, made indulgence.

What he and his father had vowed—probably spoils taken in war, he brought into the temple. So far well; but he afterwards alienated from the temple what belonged to it, and for the purpose of bribing the king of Syria into an act of treachery.... Ramah was in the tribe of Benjamin, and not far from Jerusalem. It is interesting to mark the geographical consistency of the towns which Ben-hadad is here said to have smote, with the position of Damascus, which was his capital and lay on the north of these northern places in Israel: Tirzah is on the north border of Ephraim, and much farther from Jerusalem than Ramah; Geba was near Ramah, and so must Mizpah have been.... There was a temporal infliction laid upon Asa, perhaps in conformity with the nature of the Jewish economy, as a chastisement for his errors. He, however, on the whole, bore a righteous character, and transmitted the kingdom to a successor alike righteous with himself.

25-31.—The history alternates back again from Judah to Israel. What a succession of evil kings! Gibbethon is marked as near Gath. There Nadab met his death at the hands of Baasha, an Israelite of the tribe of Issachar, who was the instrument in God's hand for the fulfilment of His word against the house of Jeroboam. What a wretched history altogether of sin and vengeance is that of these sad evil-doers, the kings of Israel!... When the story touches on aught in which Judah and Israel bore a common report, it leads occasionally to repetition, as in verses 16 and 32 of this chapter, which both relate the perpetual war between Asa and Baasha, by which the strength of God's people was broken, and they became an easy prey to the inroads of enemies.... Tirzah was, at this time, the capital of Israel.... The reign of Baasha was a

pretty long one for an Israelitish king. He supplanted the dynasty of Jeroboam, but did no better than him—walking in his way, and in the identical sin wherewith he made Israel to sin.

1 KINGS XVI. 1-7.—It was God who exalted Baasha; but it does not appear that Baasha had any express commission from God. It may have been solely in God's providence and not by God's precept that Baasha became a weapon in His hand for the execution of His threatened judgments on the house of Jeroboam. At all events, Baasha was no better than his predecessor—upon which he received a communication from God, by the mouth of the prophet Jehu, denouncing his iniquities and passing the identical sentence on him that Ahijah did on the house of Jeroboam. (ch. xiv. 11.) Not that either Jeroboam or Baasha had violent deaths inflicted upon them.... The last clause of verse 7 has divided our Bible interpreters. It may mean, "because he (Baasha) killed him," (Nadab, or Jeroboam in his posterity;) or the "because" might be translated "therefore," (*propterea,*) and then it might mean, "He (God) killed him." (Baasha.) It is no argument against the former translation, that God would not punish Baasha for killing Nadab, as he was thereby executing the will of God. Yes; but not because it was the will of God—even of Him who can make the wrath or the wickedness of man the instrument of His pleasure, and yet punish that wickedness—even as he did to the murderers of our Lord; and at various times in their history to the enemies of Israel.

8-20.—I take no note of the chronology of these reigns, though much might be drawn for the settlement of this

from the checks and comparisons of the two distinct accounts that we have of two distinct kingdoms.... The sentence on Baasha was fully accomplished by the hand of Zimri. He did according to the word of the Lord, though not at the bidding of that word, but most probably on the impulse of his own ambition.

But Zimri's was a short-lived reign. The people, it seems, were encamped against Gibbethon, the same to which they laid siege at the time of a former revolution. (ch. xv. 27.) They then marched against Tirzah, with Omri at their head; and Zimri may be said to have fallen a suicide by his own hands. It is probable that the seven days of his reign are estimated from his ascent to the throne to the proclamation of Omri, but that a longer time elapsed to his death. At all events, he lived long enough to acquire the same character of wickedness as that of Jeroboam, and to afford room for acts which were written in the history of the kings of Israel.

21-34.—This wretched history proceeds. How brief but expressive is the account of the civil war between the followers of the two rivals for the throne, and the result of it! "Tibni died, and Omri reigned." In Omri's reign the capital of Israel was transferred from Tirzah to Samaria. It is most interesting to read Dr. Robinson's account of the foundations, arches, and walls, that he observed in ascending the hill of Samaria—of the columns upon its summit, and the sculpture and old fragments built into the houses of the modern village Sebaste.... Omri exceeded in wickedness all his predecessors, and was succeeded by one still more enormously sinful than himself—the most notable of Israel's kings—Ahab, and whose wife Jezebel, was if possible more desperately reprobate than he. One of

his subjects, Hiel, did a deed of defiance to the true God of Israel, by braving the curse, which he probably knew of, that Joshua pronounced on him who should build Jericho. (Joshua vi. 26.) His eldest son died at the commencement, and his youngest at the close, of the work. God did not, even in these days of thickest darkness and iniquity, leave himself without a witness; and this striking fulfilment of a known curse and prophecy was a striking manifestation of the true and living God. And it is most important to observe such ligaments between the older and the later history—sustaining and authenticating the whole.

1 KINGS XVII. 1-6.—We now enter on a most redeeming passage of this else wretched history, and which sheds a glory over this book of Kings—the narrative of Elijah, who left no writings behind him, but whose living history ranks him among the most illustrious of Israel's prophets. He succeeds to David as the next in order among the Scriptural stars of the first magnitude. He is ushered abruptly into notice, as one of the inhabitants of Gilead. This greatest of Israel's prophets was sent to the worst of Israel's kings—to whom he announced himself as standing before the Lord, and stated the mighty power of his word, as derived, of course, and dependent on the Fountain of all power.... The brook Cherith is the same, it is thought, with the Wady Kelt, which runs near Jericho, and terminates in the Jordan, at a point nearly due west of it. What an interest attaches to this locality, and what an unspeakable charm to the picture of Elijah fed by ravens, and drinking of the brook!

7-24.—Another precious incident in this illustrious life. The brook dried up—but God interposed by miracle; and

let us, too, hope that He will ever interpose by special Providence, when all visible means fail us.... There must have been a certain faith in the widow's mind, that led her to share with Elijah what to all appearance was her last morsel—a faith in his promise, and in the message he gave her from God. This faith, however, failed her on her child's death, and she upbraided the prophet. It may, however, have been the urgency of passion, and not the want of faith, which prompted her remonstrance—for she proceeds on his prophetic character when she interprets the visitation into a chastisement for sin, of which she must have apprehended that Elijah was conscious. It was not the sin of her son's illegitimacy—for she was a widow. But in these days of general idolatry, she might have been at no loss for the recollection of some great delinquency, now recalled to her mind by the affliction that had been sent to her. All was righted, however, by the child's miraculous restoration; and when the woman says she now *knows* him to be a man of God, and that the word of the Lord in his mouth is truth, let us not forget that at the first she knew the same thing so far, or had such a feeling of its probability—that the word of promise in regard to her future subsistence led her to give Elijah the bread which he asked of her—a fine example, therefore, of probability brightening into proof, or verisimilitude into verity, and of the incipient duty which comes immediately in the train of an incipient belief.

1 Kings xviii. 1-15.—It was in the third year of the famine that Elijah received this message from God.... Obadiah was one specimen of the remaining piety of Israel, as testified by his illustrious service in behalf of

the hundred prophets whom Jezebel would have destroyed. I should imagine these prophets not—in general at least—to have the gift of foretelling events, but to be simply teachers of the people in divine things. Obadiah hid them in two caves. Elijah met him while prosecuting the errand on which he had been sent by Ahab. Probably Elijah knew Obadiah, and told him who he himself was; on which Obadiah, familiar with the name, put the question of verse 7 to the messenger from Heaven. Ahab must have exacted an oath from those amongst whom he searched for Elijah, only in those nations over whom he had power or with whom he was allied. One cannot wonder, amid the doings of violence and persecution of which Obadiah was so fully aware, that he should have expressed the apprehension he did lest Ahab should kill him, on his being the bearer of a message from one whom he deemed to be the great troubler of Israel.

16-24.—It does not appear to have been Ahab's design in seeking after Elijah, to kill him, but to obtain from him a reversal of his word—even that word on which, he informed Ahab, it depended (ch. xvii. 1) whether there should be rain from heaven or not. He inflicted no violence on Elijah when they met, and acquiesced in the proposal made to him by the prophet for a determination of the question between the true God and the god of the idolaters. They are called the prophets of the groves—these being their haunting-places or places of worship; and they were fed at the table of Jezebel their great patroness. One likes the intrepidity of the prophet's rebuke of the monarch, and the subdued consent of the monarch to the proposition that was made to him. Elijah carried the people along with him, as the collective mind of

the many generally is inclined to aught which is palpably and obviously reasonable. It was a noble appeal on which Elijah ventured the cause, and which argued the firmness of his faith in God!

25-39.—We have here the triumphant result of this comparative trial, as it may be called. A very noticeable thing is the irony or derision which Elijah casts upon the prophets of Baal—reminding us of the same method of attack or exposure being practised by Isaiah in one of his denunciations against idolatry. Although ridicule be not the test of truth, yet we have scriptural sanction for it as being a legitimate weapon wherewith to put down a palpable and mischievous absurdity—and therefore not always to be condemned, even in religious controversy, for the more effectual discomfiture of all that is opposed to truth and godliness. The priests of Baal seem to have been all the more urged by the satire of Elijah to that extravagance which only made their overthrow all the more signal. Mark when Elijah began his trial, how in the twelve stones, as representative of the twelve tribes, he gave evidence of his commission being given to him for the sake of general Israel, as comprehensive of both its kingdoms. What a testimony in the eyes of all the people, when in the immediate train of his audible prayer expressly lifted up for their being made to know God, and for their hearts being turned back unto Him, so striking a manifestation ensued as the descent of fire from heaven, burning the sacrifice, after licking up all the water which had been purposely placed around it! And it told accordingly; for *all* the people joined in the testimony that the Lord—that is Jehovah, the God of the Hebrews—was the true God.

40-46.—Not necessarily that he slew them with his own hand: he would not want executioners among the people who, at his bidding, seized upon the prophets of Baal. The brook Kishon is near mount Carmel. It is said that they were the prophets of Baal who were slain. They are said, in verse 19, to amount to 450. There is no mention here of the prophets of the groves, who in the same verse are said to amount to 400.... Ahab, who seems to have stood passive during the whole of this transaction, places himself under the direction of Elijah—and as by his direction he went to eat and drink, so at his saying it is likely that he believed there would be rain. I know not a more impressive—I had almost said a more sublime scriptural image—than Elijah on the top of Carmel invoking rain from the west, as he looked toward the Mediterranean. What a testimony for God was thus given to Ahab, and yet how completely it was thrown away upon him! However, the impression for the moment was abundantly strong—so that he was all docility in the meantime.... There is somewhat of rude and primitive simplicity in the act of Elijah running before the chariot of Ahab to Jezreel. He who, with the authority of a Divine ambassador, rebuked the monarch, yet with the respect and loyalty of a subject, acted as an attendant or outrunner upon foot to the king in his chariot.

1 Kings xix. 1-8.—I should rather imagine that Ahab, apart from Jezebel, had good points and properties about him—an inference which I would draw in the first instance from his toleration both for Elijah's presence and proposals on the occasion of their meeting, as in the last chapter; and then, from the strength of a good impression made

upon his mind towards the latter end of his life. But Jezebel, that most consummate specimen of female wickedness, must have been a sad corrupter to him; and here we have an outbreaking from her against the prophet of the true God. It seems odd that she should have let Elijah know her murderous inclination beforehand; but probably she dared not put it into effect because of his present popularity—while by the utterance of her threat she forced him to flee, and so was delivered of his presence.... The general opinion is, that he needed no more meat for forty days after he had eaten the second time; but I think it possible that the angel who had fed him a first and a second time, may have kept by him daily, and fed him with such meat daily, and so in the strength of that meat, or of these daily supplies, may he have been carried onward to Horeb, the mount of God.

9-21.—There is not a sublimer process on record than the one described in this passage; and the climax of the sublimity is the "still small voice." And the converse held with it by the prophet is signally instructive. The complaint of Elijah, and the reply of God to him, are both quoted by the Apostle—and this in proof of an unseen remnant in Israel who were saved. This held good even amid all the appearances of a universal defection—even such appearances as imposed on the prophet himself, and led him to believe that he stood alone as a worshipper of the true God. But God himself, who knoweth them that are His, could tell him of seven thousand who had not bowed the knee to Baal.—Oh, my God, may I be in the number of thy hidden ones!... The commission now given to Elijah introduces us for the first time to his successor—also a Scripture character of no

small notoriety and honour. It is not said that the mantle of Elijah cast upon Elisha was the precursor of his spirit also resting upon him—though it is generally so understood, and indeed proverbially so spoken of.... It is remarkable that the appointment of Hazael, king of Syria, should have thus proceeded ostensibly from God, and that a prophet of Israel should have been concerned in it. It is a question whether Elijah literally anointed Hazael, or figuratively only, by declaring him to be king of Syria.

May, 1844.

1 Kings xx. 1-12.—Ben-hadad, the king of Syria, whereof Damascus was the capital, with thirty-two allied or dependent kings, now made a formidable invasion on Israel.... It would appear that by his first proposal Ahab might deliver what he required; but Ahab's consent defeated his object, which was a quarrel, and so he aggravated his proposal, and insisted on a personal visitation and search by his servants—which was beyond the endurance of the king of Israel, who had humbled himself already so far, but could not brook this indignity.... There is something interesting in this barbaric war, and the insight which is afforded into the manners and practices of these rude and rough warriors. A picture might well be conceived of the coarse festivity that was going on in the pavilions where Ben-hadad and his kings were holding revelry; and of the indignant feeling wherewith the defiance of Ahab in reply to their own boastful and insulting message would be received by them. There is a real evidence in the picturesque of Scripture—for it is obviously not the picturesque of literary describers or dramatists, but that of plain narrators; and whose picturesque,

therefore, when it does occur, should be put down to the truthfulness and nature of the events or scenes which they set before us.

13-22.—God had not yet forsaken Israel utterly, but keeps by them, and continues to ply them with His testimonies. It was an act of great forbearance on His part to send Ahab a prophet in this the time of his extremity —and that, too, with words of counsel and encouragement. The young men of the princes of the provinces, their pages or attendants—so few as 232 in number—were to be the first assailants of the enemy, which gave quite a miraculous character to the defeat that ensued, in consequence of which the Syrians were thrown into a state of terror and confusion, of which Ahab availed himself, and probably at the head of the seven thousand, went forth and completed their discomfiture. We cannot assign the boundary which separates the natural from the miraculous; but it is obvious that the latter does not supersede the former. The first success, though evidently miraculous, was helped by the circumstance of Ben-hadad and his chiefs along with him being in a state of drunkenness. And then, after the object of this signal interposition had been fully attained, Ahab is ordered not to cast himself wholly upon another, but to strengthen himself, and so be prepared for another attack that would be made upon him in the following year.

23-30.—Samaria is in an elevated region, greatly above the level of the sea of Galilee. There are three Apheks, and one of them is to the east of that sea, in a plain country. If this, as is most probable, be the Aphek of our passage, it implies a long march for Ahab and his army; but it accords both with the position of Damascus

and the respective characters of the two countries, the one hilly and the other flat. The agreements which one observes between the historical and the geographical, are both pleasing and confirmatory....The reasoning of the Syrians on the gods of various localities, is quite in keeping with their rude paganism; whereas the proposal to substitute captains for the kings in their army, proves that these held their monarchy not on the score of personal and warlike qualities alone, but probably from descent, or that sort of right—whether hereditary or possessory—which argues a somewhat advanced state of society. ...The persevering condescension and forbearance of God towards Ahab are truly marvellous, and all for the purpose of causing him to know that the God of Israel was indeed the true God, or Jehovah. It all proved to him but the savour of death unto death; and the signal victory but aggravated the condemnation of him who still persisted in his wickedness....The wall may have fallen by an earthquake.... It has been well remarked that the seven continuous days of military service, both here and at Jericho, proves that military duties were performed by Jews, and even under the Divine sanction, upon the Sabbath.

31-43.—I cannot but think that Ahab, with all his wickedness, had a certain susceptibility or facility of temperament, which somewhat serves to abate our indignation against him. His mild treatment of Elijah, and his yielding compassion for Ben-hadad, may be quoted as instances....The prophet who rebuked Ahab was commissioned by God. What he said to his neighbour was in the word or words of the Lord; and he may have had as much of visible authority from the Lord, as should

have been recognised and respected by his fellow, so that the destruction of him by a lion may have been a righteous judgment upon his disobedience. His statement to Ahab was no more a falsehood than a parable is. It was a parable by action; and, like that of Nathan to David, it virtually concluded in a "Thou art the man." The heaviness or dejection of spirit which came upon Ahab after the denunciation of the prophet, presents another manifestation of his susceptibility. I hold him to have been the subject or victim of a resistless pathology, which while it made him the slave of the worst, also brought him occasionally under the sway of the better emotions.

1 Kings xxi. 1-16.—This view of Ahab's character is confirmed, we think, by the exhibitions of him in this chapter: There is covetousness to which he gave way. There is also wounded pride, to the mortifying sense of which he gave way in deep and helpless dejection—there being within him no counteractive energy by which to surmount and get the better of it. There was no energy on the side of conscience to overcome his covetousness, and as little energy on the side of daring and aggressive wickedness to revenge himself of the affront which he had suffered, and enable him to trample on the offender. But this energy which he wanted was abundantly made up for by Jezebel. She got his consent to use his name for any thing. In his passiveness he laid no obstacle in the way of the most enormous atrocities, though he had no aggressiveness for the perpetration of them. He only permitted—but Jezebel perpetrated: it was she who wrote the letters and sealed them and sent them, and all to compass a most diabolical iniquity—in which, too, she

succeeded by the subornation of false witnesses—so that, with unfaltering step, through the fourfold guilt of deceit, and perjury, and robbery, and murder, she got Ahab instated in full possession of the vineyard which his heart was set upon.

17-29.—The ever-watchful God, the Judge and Avenger of all violence among men, promptly sent His prophet to Ahab, charged with denunciations against him and his house, because of the dire iniquity which had just been perpetrated. It was an iniquity which found him out; and one wonders not that Ahab should look on Elijah as his enemy—seeing that he had made the Master of Elijah in the heavens indeed his enemy. The way in which he characterized the wickedness of Ahab harmonizes, we think, with any previous view that we have had of it. He sold himself to sin, became its slave, gave himself over or up unto it, put himself into its hands to wield its unresisted ascendency over him. He thus became passively and helplessly the subject of influences external to himself—just as the flesh is, just as the corrupt nature is, sold under sin, (Rom. vii. 14,) with no counteractive principle to withstand or keep it in check. His style of wickedness, if I may so speak, differed from that of Jezebel. His was a pathology that gave way to every motion of sin in his flesh, to which he made himself over, or to which he sold himself, and became the passive and unresisting subject of all that it prompted or commanded. Jezebel, again, was a commander. He sold himself to the work of wickedness: she stirred him up. His style accords more with the privative character of evil: her's, again, without being really inconsistent with this notion of the schoolmen, has more the aspect of a positive

character. And it was quite in unison with all that we have said of Ahab, that he should have felt and acted as he did under the imprecations of the prophet. It was, after all, but another movement of his susceptible pathology, induced by another influence which had been brought to bear upon it. It is, however, a very interesting view of God's dealings, to find that He bore such respect to the movement as to postpone the threatened retribution during Ahab's lifetime. Jezebel, instead of being sold to sin, did its work with an energy that looked more like her own.

1 Kings xxii. 1-6.—Ahab had three years' peace, which might be put to the account of his promised respite.... Ramoth-gilead was on the other side of Jordan; and though the king of Syria had promised to restore all the cities of Israel—yet still this one remained in his possession.... It is not easily accounted for—why Jehoshaphat, one of Judah's good kings, should have gone so readily into the overtures made by Ahab; and still less that he should so liken and identify himself and his people with the king and people of revolted and idolatrous Israel. Perhaps the semblance of contrition by Ahab for the enormities of his past life may have had some effect in softening the mind of Jehoshaphat, and leading him to place a rash confidence in the professions and seeming change of the king of Israel. At all events, Jehoshaphat's adherence to the true God still continued; and Him it was whom he proposed to consult when he called for inquiry at the word of the Lord, upon which it was that Ahab assembled his four hundred false prophets, who might prophesy before them.

7-18.—It is not improbable that Jehoshaphat recognised

the false and heathenish character of all these prophets, and that this prompted him to ask for another. And it is further likely that when Ahab confessed to that other, but stated at the same time the dislike he bore him—because he always prophesied evil—that this would all the more confirm Jehoshaphat in his desire to hear him, because of his very singularity in the midst of all those prophets who were now before him. The existence of such a prophet in Israel forms another proof that God did not leave himself even there without a witness. While the messenger had gone for Micaiah these false prophets repeated their assurances in various forms to the two monarchs, now sitting together in state and waiting the arrival of Micaiah, who came with the determination to speak none other than what the Lord Jehovah authorized him. His first deliverance was given ironically—a style adopted by Elijah (ch. xviii. 27) and others who were true messengers from God. It is not, however, recorded as ironical: we only gather this from Ahab's reply.—There can be no doubt, that many scriptural difficulties might be resolved, if we but knew all the unrecorded accompaniments.... The second deliverance was in good earnest; and Ahab took it as such.

19-28.—In verse 17, Micaiah's vision goes to establish that Israel would be defeated, and that Ahab would fall—and therefore that the people, deprived of their leader, having no master, should forthwith return to their own habitations. In this passage Micaiah gives a fuller account of his vision. His seeing God upon His throne in heaven is a counterpart to the spectacle at this time before him of the two earthly monarchs upon their thrones.—This vision is extenuated—in the representations of

theologians—from God's commandment to God's permission of the lying spirit. It is just what we should have expected from them, and acquiesce in too, though I have no demand for any mitigation of this sort to satisfy myself—willing that the whole shall abide an unresolved mystery till we shall know even as we are known.... The insolence of Zedekiah seems to have been stirred up by the assumption of an inspiration on the part of Micaiah which he had arrogated to himself, and would have claimed as his monopoly to the exclusion at least of Micaiah.... It is again strange that Jehoshaphat should not have attempted to protect Micaiah from the violence of Ahab—partly, it may be, because restrained by the sense of its being a case not within his jurisdiction. There was surely, however, a great want or weakness of principle in his going up to the battle with Ahab.

29-40.—Jehoshaphat, when the attack was directed against himself in particular, either cried out to God, as 2 Chron. xviii. 31 might well lead us to suppose, or called out to his enemies, telling them who he was—though some of the captains may have previously known him and informed the others. There was a want of perfect rightness in his going with Ahab at all; and the danger and fright he was put into may be regarded in the light of a chastisement.... The bow at a venture which killed Ahab received its unerring direction from on high, just as it is man who casteth the lot, but the disposal thereof is of the Lord. The prophecy regarding him was fulfilled at the pool of Samaria, where they washed his chariot and armour, and where the dogs licked the blood thus mingled in the water.... The retreat of the Israelites does not seem to have been followed up by any pursuit on the side of

the enemy, satisfied that in the terms of their king's commandment they had cut off Ahab. And so, agreeably to the deliverance of Micaiah, the Israelites, in obedience to the proclamation, went every man to his city and his country—"returned every man to his house in peace"—having for the time no master and no shepherd.... Ahab's ivory house may have been so called, though only coated or inlaid with ivory. Ahab's *eclat* is associated with Elijah.

41-53.—The history alternates back from Israel to Judah. It is a remarkable feature in these annals, that hitherto special notice is given of the mothers of all the kings of Judah, and in no instance—yet at least—of the mothers of the kings of Israel. Let me observe if this peculiarity be kept up.... Though Jehoshaphat is ranked among the righteous kings, yet he too was not perfect as David, as evinced in his toleration for high places—an infirmity this in keeping with what we have already seen of his too accommodating facility in his alliance and intercourse with Ahab. He was, however, a reformer; and the enormity which flourished in the days of Rehoboam, (ch. xiv. 24,) and was not fully removed by Asa, (ch. xv. 12,) he succeeded in extirpating. It is a frequent accompaniment of idolatry. It was well in him to have made peace with Israel, but he should not have entered into close and friendly alliance with them.... Edom was at this time subject to Judah, and had been since David's time. (2 Sam. viii. 14.) The elder served the younger. (Gen. xxv. 23.)... Ezion-geber lay at the extremity of the eastern gulf of the Red sea. The ships had been wrecked or gone to pieces in the offing. We have much more of this monarch's history in the Chronicles.... The present book of Kings

concludes with the beginning of Ahaziah's reign, who, it is said, walked in the way both of his father and mother, whose name is not mentioned here. Let it be remarked that the worship of Baal was a step in advance beyond the way of Jeroboam, it being in the still more idolatrous way of Ahab and Jezebel.

II. KINGS.

2 Kings i.—The Israelites must at this time have had a dominion over the Moabites, which they now broke away from. Moab lay in the way of Israel by the tribe of Reuben, at the southern end of their territory, on this side of Jordan.

We again meet with Elijah, and in his message to the servants of Ahaziah do we see how God still kept by this rebellious people, in the way at least of remonstrance and denunciation. We cannot help remarking an identity between the costume of Elijah and that of John the Baptist. He must have acted not in his own spirit, but by the will of God, as signified in the act of sending down the fire which he called for from heaven. But the Apostles, who would have imitated Elijah in this, acted in their own spirit, and were rebuked accordingly. There seems a gradation in the addresses of these three captains —the first abrupt and imperious, the second more respectful, the third supplicatory and fearful. After that God had sufficiently manifested his righteous judgments, He forbore the repetition of them on the third captain, and sent Elijah direct to Ahaziah. It was a solemn testimony both to Ahaziah and all who heard of it, when his death was thus made known to him as a visitation from

the true God, because of the despite done to Him in the homage made to Baal, whom alone this idolatrous monarch was for consulting and inquiring after. And he died, according to Elijah's word. Jehoram who succeeded him was his brother—so that at this time there were two king Jehorams.

2 KINGS II. 1-14.—If it was the Gilgal near Jericho that Elijah went from, then he must have first gone to Beth-el, and then returned to the same quarter. The Gilgal towards the Mediterranean accords better with a progressive movement.... It does not appear how the sons of the prophets received their knowledge of Elijah's coming translation—whether from himself or by the revelation of it given to one of their own number. Elisha put away or discouraged the mention of it, as if it were a sore subject to him. He clave to Elijah as long as he could. It might not have been a double portion of the spirit over Elijah, but a double portion of the spirit over the other prophets, that Elisha sought after. Whichever of these it was, Elijah told him that it was a rare and a great thing that he asked—yet told him what the token should be for its fulfilment, and which came to pass. It was the sight of him, and not the mantle which fell from him, that was that token, although the mantle and the spirit of Elijah are associated together in the general imagination. There is something pathetic in the exclamation of Elisha, when he speaks of Elijah as the chariot of Israel and the horsemen thereof—doing him the homage of being Israel's glory and Israel's strength. And when, on striking the waters of Jordan, he invokes Elijah's God, he implores the power which God had so often put forth

in those miracles which He enabled his great predecessor to perform..... It is interesting to connect the mystery which overhung the death of Moses, and the translation of Elijah, with the appearance of both at the transfiguration of Jesus.... Elijah has an undoubted place among the magnates of Scripture.

15-25.—Elisha, though second or rather greatly inferior to Elijah, yet seems to exceed him in the number and stupendousness of his miracles. There is nothing, I think, equal to the history of Elisha in this respect, of all the merely human messengers of God who were favoured with this extraordinary gift, whether in the Old or New Testament. Elisha, in the first instance, equalled the last achievement of Elijah, in parting the waters of Jordan. Perhaps it was their knowledge of this which led the sons of the prophets at Jericho to say that the spirit of Elijah rested on Elisha. He gave no countenance, however, to their proposal for searching after Elijah, till they at length extorted his consent. The result was such as might have been anticipated. He is then led to the performance of a second miracle. It is observable that instrumentality is employed—such as the throwing of salt into the water—and yet the healing takes place supernaturally. It is quite clear that salt could not of itself have restored the water in all time coming.... Beth-el was the seat of one of the golden calves. The boys of this idolatrous city mocked this prophet of the true God, calling on him to go up after Elijah, that they might be well rid of them both. Elisha's imprecation was of course agreeable to the will of God, who followed it up by a fulfilment, punishing the children, punishing through them the parents, who were in all likelihood the instigators of the affront, and mani-

festing the claims of the living and only God in a city which had disowned Him. After this he journeyed over a large extent of the land of Israel.

2 Kings iii. 1-19.—Jehoram pitched lower in wickedness than Ahab, though sinful up to the mark of Jeroboam—the worship of Baal being held more atrocious than of the golden calves.

The rebellion of Moab took place in the reign of Ahaziah; but it does not seem that till now any measures had been taken for putting it down. The tribute was in the produce of the country; and to recover their dominions all Israel was numbered; and Jehoshaphat, with such a facility as before, was induced to join them. It is interesting to mark the geographical truth and keeping of this narrative; but in the wilderness of Edom they were overtaken with a want of water; and Elisha, who by the destination of the Lord accompanied the army, was called for by the three kings in the hour of their extremity. One sees the piety of Jehoshaphat in those inquiries of his which led to the discovery of Elisha, and in the respect which he expressed for the prophet, who called for a minstrel to soothe his spirit, discomposed by the presence of Jehoram, or, in other words, had recourse to a natural influence as a precursor to, and for aught we know a preparation for, a supernatural influence. There are not wanting analogies to this in the methods by which God conducts the administration of His grace. And the hand of the Lord indeed came upon him, to the effect of making him the instrument of a most stupendous miracle—a supply of water, not from the heavens above, but either by a formation of the element or its ascent from below,

yet confined to the valley where Elisha had ordered the making of ditches to receive it. The "light thing" was greater than the thing added to it, in respect of its miraculousness; but victory is a farther advance than preservation.

20-27.—It was at the time of the morning sacrifice, a daily religious rite performed in Jerusalem, that the miracle was wrought—followed up by a complete victory on the side of Israel. This reference to the time of the morning sacrifice, in connexion with an event that happened at so great a distance from Jerusalem, marks it as being a notable period of the day in the national mind, and at present would associate the God to whom this sacrifice was made with the extraordinary deliverance that ensued; and so constitute it into a testimony for the God of the Jews, and the acceptableness of their worship, as signalized above the worship either of the Israelites or Edomites.... There is considerable ambiguity in the concluding verse of this chapter: It may have been the son of the Moabite king, or of the Edomite king taken captive, that was made a burnt-offering; and the indignation against Israel might be so explained as to tally with either of these suppositions. We must acquiesce at times in the uncertainties that we are not able to resolve or dissipate.

2 Kings iv. 1-7.—Elisha is beyond question the most stupendous worker of miracles in the Old Testament, with the exception, perhaps, of Moses—though exceeding even him, I should think, in the variety of his wonderful works. The one recorded here bears a close resemblance to that of the Saviour when He turned water into wine; and, like many of His, too, it was a miracle of benevolence,

performed for the relief of a poor widow, whose sons were on the eve of being seized upon by her creditor. Her husband had been a prophet or teacher of religion, and we may gather from this the marriage of the clergy as well as of the priests, under the old economy. She shut the door, perhaps to keep off neighbours who might seize upon the oil that multiplied at this rate, and could scarcely be said to be any one's property, but which, nevertheless, was designed as a special gift to her. Her doing as she was bid, evidenced faith in the divine commission of Elisha. Her husband had probably been one of the seven thousand who bowed not the knee to Baal. The price of the oil both paid her debt and left her a competency to the bargain.

8-27.—Shunem is now Solam on the south-west base of Little Hermon, and on the north side of the valley of Jezreel.... Hospitality, and more especially to ecclesiastics, may be recognised from this passage as a customary practice in Israel. The prophet's chamber has become proverbial, from the chamber which, along with its simple furniture, is here described so graphically.... Elisha must have been a man of influence in high places, as appears from the offer he makes to the Shunammite. It is a fine answer on her part, expressive of her freedom from ambition and adhesiveness to her own neighbourhood. On declining this, he put forth his miraculous power—or rather his gift of prophecy, on her behalf, she being, or affecting to be, somewhat incredulous in the matter. And the prophecy had its exact fulfilment.

He by this time had well earned the confidence of the Shunammite—so that when her son died she instantly repaired to him. The story of the child's illness and death is simply and affectingly told. She did not communicate

the death to Gehazi, but put him off with the reply of all being well—reserving the circumstance for his master. Elisha here discovers his habitual intercourse with God in heaven, though he had not been told what had befallen the Shunammite—only inferring something extraordinary from her appearance.

28-37.—Her communication to Elisha is briefly related here. She reminds him of what she had said in verse 16. ... Elisha's first experiment failed—he did not succeed through Gehazi; and, unlike to the Saviour, who healed those at a distance from Him, it behoved him to be present himself ere the child should be restored. He seems to have gone in consequence of the Shunammite's importunity—who had no such faith in the message by Gehazi as the centurion had in the efficacy of our Saviour's word, and for which he was so highly extolled by Him. But it was not by a simple word that Elisha succeeded in his miracle: He prayed, and seems to have been in great labour—and to have plied a busy and close instrumentality. There was great ado to effectuate the revival—as if in rebuke for counting on so great an achievement by the mere sending of a servant.... One can enter into the grateful reverence of the mother, and the profound obeisance which she rendered to the prophet. This is another of Elisha's great miracles.

38-44.—There seems to have been a college of prophets at Gilgal, not at Jericho—for the prophets of whom we read there (ch. ii. 15) came thither to view the two—Elijah and Elisha. What took place there has given rise to the other proverbial expression of "death in the pot." It may be observed here, as in innumerable other instances, that the miraculous power does not supersede a

previous instrumentality, as in the casting of meal by Elisha into the pot. This chapter on the whole gives a powerful impression of the profusion of Elisha's miracles; and some of them come nearer to the character of those miracles which are recorded of our Saviour, than any others of which we read in the Old Testament: as the increase of the widow's oil, though not altogether like, yet reminding us of the water turned at Cana into wine; and then the miracle at the close of this chapter, perfectly like our Saviour's miracle of the loaves. It was the multiplication of loaves at a word, or "according to the word of the Lord."

2 KINGS V. 1-14.—In this chapter there is a continuance of the same wondrous manifestations by the hand of Elisha. And we see furthermore the over-ruling providence of God in this history of Naaman—in that through the incidental suggestion of a little captive girl kings were set in motion, and this beautiful and singularly instructive history was realized.... King Jehoram's alarm was very natural; but he too got a lesson from the occurrence here recorded respecting the true God, which should have told upon him, or if not, would aggravate his condemnation: He was made to know, by the message of Elisha, who it was with whom the power and supremacy of all things was really vested.... Naaman's dignity was offended at the withholding of a personal attention to himself on the part of the prophet; but the want of his appearance, along with the simplicity of the prescription, would bring out more nakedly, and so more impressively, that the God of the prophet was indeed the living and the true God. But far the most precious lesson of this passage, and the

one of which most frequent use has been made, is founded on the remonstrance of Naaman's servants to their master.—O let us apply to the blood of Christ, and be washed from our sins at this sacred fountain, instead of attempting by cumbersome and complicated and operose methods, to work out a righteousness of our own.... Let it again be well remarked, that the miracle did not supersede the necessity of Naaman—who was the subject of the miracle—having got something to do. In like manner, though redeemed by the blood of Christ, insomuch that the forgiveness of our sins is *through* this blood, (Eph. i. 7,) still it is *through* faith in His blood (Rom. iii. 25) that we obtain the remission of our sins.

15-27.—Naaman was effectually taught by this miraculous cure; and his return to Elisha, along with his acknowledgment of the true God, forms a good exhibition of him. It was, however, somewhat overweening in him to desire some earth from Elisha, whether to build an altar with, or as a remembrancer of the prophet and of his land. There was also a want of thoroughness and of following the Lord fully, in the request he made for an indulgence, which still Elisha seems to have granted. This is in harmony with many other evidences that occur in the Old Testament, of their economy being not a permanent but progressive one—a stage, as it were, towards the optimism of future times—and hence the manifold accommodations of which we read, because of the hardness of their hearts in that backward state of the world, or in those times of ignorance which God winked at.... The noble disinterestedness of Elisha is contrasted with by the covetousness of Gehazi, and the guilt of this aggravated by his falsehoods. But it did not escape the discernment

of the prophet, who proclaimed to him the transference of Naaman's leprosy to his own person. There is a deal of graphic interest in this whole narrative.

2 KINGS VI. 1-7.—We have here the record of another miracle by him who exhibited this power above all others, and with astonishing variety. At this time he must have been, it would seem, in Gilgal, which he frequently visited, or Jericho, though he had a residence, too, in Samaria.... The banks of Jordan must have been wooded. It is remarkable here, too, that there was an instrumentality required ere the iron was raised up—yet not an instrumentality, however, which had any natural tendency towards the accomplishment of the miracle. It would have been as great a miracle for the wood to have sunk and buoyed up the iron as for the iron to have risen by itself to the surface. But at times there is an instrumentality in a direction, at least, towards the desired consummation, as in our Saviour's anointing with clay and spittle the eyes of the blind man. The line of demarcation between the natural and the miraculous is altogether a curious subject —but one on which we must be exclusively guided by the facts set before us in Scripture.

8-23.—Elisha, by his preternatural discernment of the enemy's counsels, was enabled to warn the king of Israel of all his hostile movements, who could thus make a timely avoidance of all the places where the enemy encamped and was in force—though not without reconnoitring and verifying the situation of the adverse army, and so regulating his own proceedings as to save himself and his people from falling into the hands of the invader. ... The king of Syria suspected that his own servants

betrayed his designs and made them known to the king of Israel.... Elisha, on being beleaguered by the forces of Syria, uttered another of the memorabilia of Scripture: "They that be with us are more than they that be with them." The prayer of Elisha was followed up by a wondrous revelation. Was it a reality or a vision? The blindness wherewith they who came to seize on him were struck was at least such a blindness that they could not discriminate places or people, and so they resigned themselves to the guidance which led them into Samaria. When they got there, their usual power of vision was restored to them; and they saw themselves at the mercy of the king of Israel. The Syrians, however, were treated with great lenity and generosity; and such was the impression on them that they desisted from the further invasion of Israel. Thus Elisha was made the instrument of a great national service.

24-33.—The Syrians only desisted for some time from invading Israel; or, instead of doing it in a sort of irregular and guerilla bands, they did it now on a large scale.... This, no doubt, is a tale of horror on the part of the Israelitish woman; and no wonder that the king was so much affected by it. His misplaced indignation against Elisha, might have been grounded on the imagination of its having been in his power to avert the calamity, and that by not putting it forth he was in effect the inflicter of it. Elisha, with prophetic anticipation, saw what was coming. It is supposed that the king, repenting of his purpose, came down after the messenger to prevent the execution of it. While Elisha talked with the elders the messenger came; but there is room for great diversity of interpretation as to the speaker who uttered what follows. It

may have been the king acknowledging that the evil was from the Lord, and that Elisha was not responsible; or it may have been the messenger, with a view to 'lay the king's resentment; or it may have been Elisha, disclaiming that he had any part in it. The last words, however, are far likelier to be those of the king, giving up in despair all expectation of relief.... That destruction should have come on Israel notwithstanding the comparative innocence of Hoshea their last king, is in keeping with God's general administration. National judgments are in return for the sins of many generations.

2 KINGS VII. 1-11.—These first verses prove that the king had made entry where Elisha was, who put forth his prophetic power and foretold a thing at the time incredible .... The denunciations upon unbelief are frequent throughout Scripture, as upon that of the lord in this passage on whom the king leaned.... There is a counterpart between the noise of horses and chariots heard here, and the sight of them in ch. vi. 17. There might be an indefinite variety of conjectures on this matter, all equally probable, but it is far better not to indulge in them, and take the narrative as it is set before us. Altogether, this is a memorable Scripture story; and the adventure of the lepers gives a dramatic interest to the whole. After satiating their hunger they gratified their avarice; but wisely and naturally reflected at length on the danger they incurred by keeping up the intelligence of what they had found from the people in the city. They first told the circumstance to a head-porter, or porter in the gate, who told others, and they conveyed the grateful information to those within, or the king's household.

12-20.—The king was naturally suspicious.... The parenthesis is obscure—though more than one plausible meaning might be made out of it.... The decisive evidence of the Syrian flight being a real one, was the strewing of the road with the garments and vessels of the fugitives. So they went securely to the camp, where the abundance of provisions cheapened them to the rate that was foretold. But all God's predictions stand fast, and have their sure accomplishment—as the curse on Jericho and the curse of Jotham, so the curse pronounced by Elisha on the unbelieving lord: The people so thronged the gate in their egress from the city to the camp, that he was thrown down and trodden to death by them.... The sale of the provisions must have taken place in the camp itself.... There is a reference made here to what is narrated more obscurely at the end of the preceding chapter. We are told more clearly and expressly in this place that the king had come down to Elisha; and that the prophecy of a coming supply was directly addressed by him to the king himself. There is nothing which calls for particular commentary in this chapter.

June, 1844.

2 Kings viii. 1-15.—The Shunammite's land must have been somehow taken possession of or confiscated during her absence.... Gehazi must have been a leper at the time that the king talked with him. It was a happy providence for the Shunammite that she should have presented herself during this conversation.

Elisha's fame must have been great among the grandees of various countries. It is not said whether he accepted of Ben-hadad's present. The answer of Elisha imported that for aught which the disease was to effectuate,

he might or would recover, but nevertheless that he would certainly die—which he did by the hand of violence.... Hazael's reply might be variously interpreted—" Thy servant is a dog, and can he do this great thing, this thing of great power?" Or, " Is thy servant a dog, that he should do this great thing, this thing of great and monstrous barbarity?" Hazael's account to Ben-hadad implied falsehood, and the assassination abominable and perfidious cruelty. Elisha's prophecy in all likelihood suggested the deed—which does not mitigate its atrocity, but just affords another of the manifold examples of God effecting His designs by the instrumentality of wicked men. There is every appearance of the same thing in the case of Jeroboam—that is, of Ahijah's prophecy being the cause of his lifting up his hand against Solomon.

16-29.—These intermarriages of the two houses did a world of mischief. It advanced the wickedness of Judah to that of Israel in its worst form, even to the degree of Ahab's, which was more atrocious than Jeroboam's. Yet God remembered David—showing mercy unto thousands of those who love Him, while He visits the iniquity of fathers upon their children to the third and fourth generations. God's judicial dealings with the posterity of the righteous and the wicked are worthy of all observation.... The attempt of Joram to reduce Edom, though signalized by victory at the first, yet failed upon the whole. We may see how the greatness of David and Solomon, in respect of territory, is trenched upon and taken away in successive portions from their wicked descendants.... The marriage of Ahaziah with Athaliah, was another most deleterious affinity for Judah. She was the sister of Ahab. It is remarkable that father and son should have married

—the former the niece and the latter the aunt. Is Athaliah the same with the daughter of Ahab mentioned in verse 18?—for she is here called the daughter of Omri. There is a certain latitude in the Hebrew, as to its manner of expressing the degree of relationship—so that the same person may perhaps be named the son or daughter either of the immediate or remote parent. Seeing that the royal families were now so closely connected, let us not wonder at their joint and common policy in the prosecution of wars.

2 Kings ix. 1-10.—Elisha again appears on the stage. It is a prophetic message in this instance, as in a former one, which stirs up the destined successor against the reigning monarch—who not necessarily from a pure sentiment of loyalty to Heaven, but it may be from the impulses of his own ambition, performs the orders or fulfils the purposes of the most High. This is obviously true of Jehu, who exhibits in the whole of his strange and impetuous career, a mixture of zeal, we think, for the Lord of Hosts, with the fervour of his own human propensities. There seems a certain factitious regard for the honour of God to have entered into the complication of those motives by which he was actuated. He was surrounded with captains, and was probably a commander of high rank in the army of king Joram. There might such notices pass from the messenger to Jehu, and such intimations be given to his own spirit as might beget in him the confidence of a real and valid commission. It was indeed a work of fell but righteous extermination that was put into his hands. The sins more particularly of Jezebel cried for vengeance. The prophecy respect-

ing her was tantamount to a command, and was so acted upon.

11-29.—There must have been something preternatural in the appearance of the messenger, which made Jehu's companions call him mad. They very readily, however, gave in to and acted on the intelligence which Jehu gave them. Jehu's was evidently a military post at Ramoth-gilead. Every thing prepared the way for the fulfilment of Elijah's prophecy respecting Ahab, whose blood was licked by dogs in the pool of Samaria—at which place, and not at Jezreel, Naboth was slain; and so the blood of both was licked by dogs at the same place. But the vineyard of Naboth at Jezreel, the subject of Ahab's crime, was also made the scene of God's judgments respecting it. Jehoram his son was cast into this field where, agreeably to the curse, (1 Kings xxi. 24,) his body would be eaten by the fowls of the air.... It was beyond the limits of Jehu's commission, at least as recorded, that he should have slain Ahaziah—though in this, too, there is the character of a righteous judgment. The whole of this passage forms a piece of very graphic history—more especially the approach of Jehu to Jezreel.... There is a seeming discrepancy between verse 29, and ch. viii. 25, explained either by imperfect years being sometimes counted and sometimes not, or by the supposition that the commencement of Joram's reign may have taken place some months before his father's death, and that this may have been the date referred to in the former passage, though not in the latter one.

30-37.—Jezebel, the arch-delinquent, meets in an extraordinary way the approach of Jehu—perhaps thinking to overawe him by the dress of royalty. She reminds

him of Zimri who slew all the house of Baasha, (1 Kings xvi. 12,) just as Jehu was now proceeding to destroy all the house of Ahab.... There is a graphic effect in the looking out of the two or three eunuchs. N.B.—Inspiration could have told absolutely whether the number was two or three—but mark how inspiration accommodates itself, and leaves part even of what is recorded to the human faculties.... Elijah said (1 Kings xxi. 23) that dogs should eat Jezebel by the wall of Jezreel; and here we read of her blood being sprinkled on the wall of the house from which she was thrown, and at the foot of which she must have been trodden down by the horses and eaten by the dogs. Her carcass became literally as dung, and nothing of her person remained whereof they could say, "This is Jezebel." Jehu seems not to have remembered the prophecy of Elijah at the time he gave orders for the burial of Jezebel; but it was brought to his mind afterwards by the intelligence that the dogs had eaten her flesh—as was written. She was of pre-eminent wickedness, and has attained a proverbial notoriety.

2 Kings x. 1-11.—It was clearly within the commission of Jehu to cut off all the family of Ahab; and we can have no doubt that zeal for the Lord was in part the impellent principle of his doings, though his own selfish passions should have been mingled with it.... The rulers of Jezreel, it is conjectured, were in Samaria, because they had been sent there along with Ahab's descendants, either when Joram went out on his expedition to Syria, or after his death, to save them from the violence of Jehu when making post-haste to Jezreel. The message was one of defiance, and one which terrified into submission the rulers

to whom it was sent—nay, into a compliance with the order of Jehu for the execution of those children whose guardians they were. There is a coarse and revolting barbarity in this sad narrative.... Jehu's speech, in verses 9 and 10, seems intended to reconcile the people to what had been done as being consistent with the duty of the immediate agents, and to be resolved into the will of God: "You the people are not to be blamed; you had no participation in these deeds of violence, and are righteous or innocent of them all. I admit that I have conspired, as Jezebel reproached me, against my master; but if I am to be condemned because of his slaughter, what ought to be your condemnation of the men who slew all these? The truth is that none of us are to be reckoned with, being but the executors of that word which the Lord spake concerning the house of Ahab by the mouth of Elijah—and not an iota of which can fail".... The commission probably extended from the slaughter of Ahab's sons to his principal officers and great men, whether civil or ecclesiastical, as well as his more distant relatives. They are all designated, in verse 11, as being *his*, and of his house, and so he left none of them remaining. These last things were done at Jezreel.

12-27.—Though we are not told that he had any charge laid on him to slay the kindred of Ahaziah, yet his doing this formed no exception to the sentence of approval afterwards passed on him by God for what he had done to the house of Ahab.... Jehonadab, it would appear from the thirty-fifth chapter of Jeremiah, was one of the worthies of Israel. The two went together in company; and though Jehu put forth a deceitful feeling, Jehonadab seems to have been privy to and to have connived at it. On the system

of a progressive morality, there may have been a toleration on the part even of the good, for what now could not be regarded with complacency. It was a fell contrivance, and most relentlessly gone through. Jehonadab was so far art and part in it, that, along with Jehu, he took care that none but the worshippers of Baal should be implicated in the coming catastrophe. The burnt-offering was that which the chief priest of Baal had rendered to the object of their idolatry. The utmost possible degradation was inflicted on the temple of Baal, by turning it into a draught-house, after the terrible work of slaughter had been completed therein.

28-36.—Jehu wholly destroyed Baal, yet clave to the sins of Jeroboam. There was a clear line of demarcation between these two grades of wickedness, as is exemplified on this occasion. It is remarkable, that keeping as he did by the lesser wickedness, he should have received from God the approving testimony which he did—though it was confined, no doubt, to what he had done unto the house of Ahab. It looks as if particular good actions will be rewarded, even though there should be such a generally wrong condition of the soul as makes it fall short of salvation. It is the same with a cup of cold water given to a disciple, which many would do even though not true and entire disciples themselves. But perhaps such rewards are temporal—as Jehu's was—in having the throne secured to his family to the fourth generation.

The description here given of Hazael's doings is not so particular as was Elisha's prophecy respecting them, and in which he foretold the shocking cruelties that he would perpetrate.

Thus much for Jehu, a noted scriptural character, and

who has even attained a proverbial notoriety—the impetuous driver is termed a Jehu.

2 Kings xi. 1-11.—Though there was none of more consummate wickedness than Jezebel, yet Athaliah has always impressed me as being, more characteristically than even she, the Lady Macbeth of Scripture. Such was her lust of power, that to make way for it she was the murderer of her own grandchildren. Joash was saved, however, from the general massacre, and hid by his aunt for six months in the house of the Lord. Jehoiada, who was either high priest or agent for him in the temple, both wisely planned and successfully executed the deliverance of the only surviving son of Ahaziah. The people of Judea, however, were under a female reign for six years, and that by the daughter of Omri, and therefore the sister of Ahab. It is fancied by some that she may have been actuated by a sort of implacable madness for the slaughter of so many of her kinsfolk, and that by the enemies of an idolatry which she was determined to uphold—or it may be by the terror of herself being included in the exterminating commission that had already been executed on so many of her relatives.... The king's house is the house in which Joash was kept, who had been shown to the rulers, and was called king in verse 8.... It does not follow that this transaction took place on the Sabbath, though it was in a great measure committed to those whose business it was to do Sabbath duty.... Both the king's house and the temple had to be guarded; and all was prepared by the counsel of a very able tactician for crowning and proclaiming Joash in front of the temple, or " along by the altar and the temple."

12-21.—The joyful concurrence of the people—whose judgments are often wrong, but feelings often right—may be regarded as an homage of their conscience to the true religion, as well as of their sense of justice to the legitimate claims of the true and proper heir to the crown. Athaliah's, too, was probably an odious and tyrannical reign. There is something impressively graphic in the description of her alarm, and of the young king's coronation, which seems to have been proceeded with in the regular and customary way, or "as the manner was." The call of "Treason, treason!" by Athaliah, was responded to by a prompt command for her execution on the part of Jehoiada, and by as prompt an obedience on the part of the soldiery—which execution took place beyond the precincts not of the temple only, but of the courts of the temple; the people thereafter willingly yielding themselves to the righteous sway of Jehoiada, who presided over the two covenants—first between the Lord on the one side, and the king and people on the other; and, secondly, between the king on the one side, and the people on the other. They then proceeded to destroy the whole apparatus of idolatry, and made away with Mattan its high priest. The whole of this revolution seems to have been executed with the full and general consent of the multitude; and so Joash was firmly seated on his throne, his full name being Jehoash, like as Joram was also Jehoram.

2 Kings xii. 1-16.—After stating the synchronism between the two kingdoms of Judah and Israel, the historian proceeds to tell us of the righteousness of Jehoash's reign, so long as he was under the wholesome tutorship of

Jehoiada, whose influence with the young king was all on the side of God and goodness. Like many other, however, of the good kings, he still tolerated the high places where the people offered the sacrifices which should have been made at Jerusalem. Still he cared for the temple, and issued a royal order for its repair, and this from the money exacted of every man by the rules and according to the estimations of the law, as well as from the freewill-offerings. The priests, however, were negligent, and it was therefore taken out of their hands. They were prohibited from raising any more money by private channels—for they had not rendered it up, but it is to be feared reserved it for their own use; and so the method was fallen upon of a collection at the door, which was given to faithful men—*so* faithful that they did not need to be reckoned with; and these expended it on the workmen, not for replacing, it would seem, the furniture, but for repairing the fabric of the temple. The money which belonged to the priests by the ordinations of the law, was not mixed up with the collection, which seems chiefly, if not altogether, to have been composed of free-will-offerings—a fine example of the voluntary method for the support of religion;—and as the priests had a legal maintenance at the same time—a most fitting example of the combination which might take place between the Voluntary and the Established.

17-21.—It is not stated here that Joash lapsed into idolatry—but so it was. .. Gath was at present under the dominion of Judah; and Hazael must have reached it by a detour ere he directed his march to Jerusalem.... It was a lamentable spoliation by which Joash bribed away Hazael from the holy city, even the holy things that were

in the house of the Lord; though in his state of degeneracy it may have been less felt than it otherwise would have been. In thus despoiling the temple, he was undoing the work of his own hands. This invasion of Judea by Hazael may be regarded in the light of a punishment on Joash. But the consummation of his punishment in this life was the conspiracy of his own servants who took away his life. The idolatrous tendencies of his maternal family adhered to him—repressed during the life of his deliverer and preceptor Jehoiada, but breaking out after his death.

2 Kings xiii. 1-13.—The history reverts to Israel, where we have an unexcepted series and succession of wicked kings. It does not appear, however, that Jehoahaz went further than to follow the sins of Jeroboam. He did not attain to the enormities of the house of Ahab, in that he worshipped Baal. The anger of the Lord was nevertheless turned against him, and Hazael—that formidable enemy both to Judah and Israel—was, as before, the instrument of vengeance. Yet how placable is God; and how He interposed for the deliverance of the land when its king besought mercy at His hand! ... There are various opinions as to who this saviour was—an angel—or a general not named—or Elisha still alive—or Jehoahaz himself, now helped to greater prosperity and success—or, finally, his son Joash, of whom we read below that he at least recovered the taken cities of Israel from Ben-hadad the son of Hazael.... Could the grove which remained in Samaria be that which Ahab made? (1 Kings xvi. 33.) ... The story of Hazael's doings, in verse 7, bears out the prophecy of Elisha.... There must have been a sad

work of exterminating violence to warrant the expression of his making the Israelites " like the dust by thrashing." Yet what obstinate perversity on their part, notwithstanding, that neither the severities of Hazael nor the mercies of God could reform them!

Joash was of the same grade with his father in wickedness. He seems to have been a successful warrior, as we read both here and in the book of Chronicles, under the reign of Amaziah, as shortly noticed in this place.

14-25.—Elisha now comes forth for the last time on the living stage of this world. Even the sinful Joash is moved by the tidings of his last illness; and on visiting him, gives way to the emotions of reverence and sorrow. This is in no way a rare phenomenon—the homage which unquestioned goodness draws from even bad men. He pays the same compliment to Elisha that Elisha did to Elijah. ... Moses was blamed for striking the rock twice, and Joash for not striking the ground often enough. There may have been unrecorded accompaniments that would explain these respective condemnations, as perhaps an impetuous anger, or even unbelief on the part of Moses—and a certain contemptuous unbelief on the part of Joash. At all events, the transaction between him and Elisha served the purpose of a prophecy; and he had no claim to being told beforehand of the connexion between the number of his strokes upon the floor and the number of his victories over Syria.

And the chapter closes with the fulfilment of the prophecy, in that Ben-hadad the son of Hazael was beaten three times.... The passage here, compared with verses 5 and 6, gives countenance to the idea that Joash was the saviour whom the Lord gave to Israel, spoken of there by

anticipation. As the fruit of these victories, the children of Israel dwelt securely in their tents—(verse 5)—though Syria was not consumed. (verse 19.)... What a winning manifestation of God's tenderness, and of His respect for a past covenant, in the compassion which he had for the children of Israel!... Hazael gave to his son and successor on the throne of Syria the name of the monarch whom he himself had dispossessed—probably in policy, and that he might the more reconcile his subjects to their new dynasty.

2 Kings xiv. 1-16.—As there were gradations of evil in the wicked kings of Israel, so there were gradations of righteousness in the good kings of Judah. If many of the former did not attain to the wickedness of Ahab, in that they worshipped not Baal, yet worshipped the calves of Jeroboam—many of the latter fell short of the perfection of David, in that the people under them did sacrifice and burnt incense on the high places. I feel the importance of all those places in the later writings of the Old Testament where reference is made to the earlier places, as here to the written law of Moses.... Amaziah, inflated it is likely by his successes in Edom, sent a hostile message to Jehoash, which was contemptuously received and replied to.... Beth-shemesh, where the consequent battle was fought, is a good way to the west of Jerusalem. The Israelites seem, on this and many other occasions, to have come round by the coast in their warlike approaches against Judea, and entered it from that direction.... Amaziah was taken captive, but not killed, though it is not stated here how he was disposed of.... The history of the kings of Israel and Judah is more intermingled at this place than usual.

17-29.—These were sadly distempered times, when kings came to violent deaths by the perfidy of their own servants.... The history of Amaziah is given here in brief. His successor was Azariah, *alias* Uzziah. He built Elath after the death of his father, who perhaps recovered it for Judah.

The story reverts to Israel with the reign of Jeroboam the second, which was an unusually long one, whose wickedness was of the lesser grade, or that of his namesake. The Hamath which he recovered, (verse 28,) may have been the Hamath even on the Orontes, though it be said to have belonged to Judah, which it might have done in virtue of the conquests of David, but which nevertheless he restored to Israel as well as the coast from the mouth of the Orontes, (verse 25,) to the sea along the plain of Esdraelon. The distance of Hamath is no objection to its being the town here mentioned—for Damascus is alike distant.... The mention of Jonah here, the oldest of the prophets whose prophetic writings have come down to us, is peculiarly interesting. His being the son of Amittai identifies him with the Jonah who was sent to Nineveh—and on an errand, too, which bespeaks the same tenderness and goodness and forbearance on the part of God, as is here so beautifully and touchingly set forth in the case of sorely afflicted Israel.... One explanation of "not any shut up, nor any left" is plausible: That things which are valuable are shut up, kept in a place of security—that things of little or no value are left; and so that there was none, either high or low, remaining who could help Israel.

2 KINGS XV. 1-12.—The reign of Azariah, or **Uzziah,**

was of extraordinary length; but the visitation of leprosy which came upon him must have affected his publicity and usefulness. The cause of this judicial infliction is not stated here, and would have been inexplicable but for another and distinct portion of the Bible. Let us not wonder, then, that in its brief histories we should at times meet with what we cannot account for.... Jotham seems to have acted as viceroy during the whole of his father's abode "in a several house"—that is, from the commencement of his leprosy to his death.

Then follows a passage of Israelitish history. The next reign to that of Jeroboam the second was very short, it being only six months. Zachariah did evil in the style and up to the degree of the wickedness of Jehu. The sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat are often referred to as the standard of the less sinful among the kings of Israel. The violent death of Zachariah was judicial, and a fulfilment of the word to Jehu—that his dynasty should last till the fourth generation.

13-31.—The history of Israel becomes now of a very disjointed and tumultuous character—first one usurper reigning only a month, and then despatched by another usurper, who reigned ten years, and during that time perpetrated the most horrible cruelties in those places which did not acknowledge him.... Assyria proper was east of the Tigris, its capital being Nineveh—whereas Syria lay between, its capital being Damascus.... Menahem seems to have been a person of great energy, and so far confirmed the kingdom in his hands as to leave it in his family, though it did not long abide there—his son Pekahiah being dethroned by a new usurper at the end of two years. Argob and Arieh, with fifty Gileadites, were the imme-

diate agents of Pekah in this conspiracy. In his reign of twenty years the Assyrians made a fresh invasion of Israel, and took captive a whole tribe—the first of those successive captivities of which we read. Another conspirator arose, of the name of Hoshea, and dispossessed Pekah both of his throne and of his life. It is remarkable of all these wicked kings that they are said only to have reached the lower standard of wickedness—that is, of Jeroboam the son of Nebat.... The worship of Baal seems to have ceased from the days of Ahab.

32-38.—The history now reverts to Judah; and in this passage we have a brief narrative of the righteous reign of Jotham—that is, righteous in the secondary or usual degree of it which was observed by the good kings of Judah, who, generally speaking, fell short of David's perfection, in that he restricted the offerings and sacrifices of the law to the one place which God had fixed upon. Jotham did as his father Uzziah had done, of whom we read that he did as his father Amaziah had done, who also tolerated the high places. We read little of Jotham in this place. The solitary act recorded of him is that he built the higher gate of the temple.... It was a natural alliance for two idolatrous kings, those of Syria and Israel, to combine against a worshipper of the true God. Yet it is so mentioned as to give the understanding of this having come upon Jotham in the form of a judicial visitation —for we read, that it was the Lord who sent Rezin and Pekah against Judah. This, however, is only spoken of as commencing in the reign of Jotham, who seems to have died peaceably though at the early age of forty-one.

2 Kings xvi. 1-9.—Ahaz is one of the most notorious

of the kings of Judah. It is not said here that like Ahab he worshipped Baal; but he seems to have arisen above the generality even of Ahab's predecessors or successors in wickedness—for not only did he walk in their way, but made his sons to pass through the fire, according to the abominations of the heathen. The passing through the fire was either for sacrifice, when there was no actual burning to death, or for lustration when there was a passing between fires, or rapidly through fire, for the purpose of purging or purifying. His religious observances in high places would differ from those of Judah under their good kings—partaking of the idolatry of his general worship.... Elath, a port on the Red sea, which had been restored to Judah, (ch. xiv. 22,) was now retaken by the Syrians from Ahaz. On this he called in, or rather implored the aid of a more distant monarch—the king of Assyria, (Tiglath-pileser,) to deliver him from the power of the confederacy between the kings of Syria and Israel. He interposed with great effect, at least in the nearer to himself of the two kingdoms, taking the capital of Syria, making its people captive, and killing its monarch.... Ahaz, in his message to Tiglath-pileser, professed himself to be his servant, in the form of a humble entreaty, and not of a demand for assistance, and sacrilegiously bribed him with the sacred treasures of the temple.

10-20.—We here perceive the idolatrous tendency of Ahaz in the fancy that he conceived for the heathen altar at Damascus—a pattern of which he sent to Urijah the priest, who most disgracefully lent himself to the execution of Ahaz's impious design. We have here Erastianism in its most glaring deformity! The substitution of this altar for the brazen altar of burnt-offerings

before the temple was a very daring act of impiety. God's altar was removed northward to an obscure part of the court, while that of Ahaz, called here "the great altar," was in front of the temple, and upon it, instead of the other, orders were given that all the prescribed offerings of the law should be made. Some think that the brazen altar was made use of by Ahaz as an oracle; others, instead of "inquiring" put "requiring:" "I shall make of it whatever use I may afterwards require." The obsequious priest did all that he required. The enormities of Ahaz were extended to other things in and about the temple: He took sacrilegious liberties with the brazen sea, and other parts of the furniture of God's house. By turning away the king's entry into the house of God, he seems to have desisted from entering it any more himself. It is said that he did this for the king of Assyria —perhaps to please him, by his open renunciation of the true worship. Ahaz died young—at the age of thirty-six—one of the most eminently wicked of the Jewish kings.

2 KINGS XVII. 1-6.—Hoshea, who is recurred to here, though a conspirator and man of blood, was not so wicked as the kings of Israel who were before him. Yet under his reign took place the great catastrophe of the Israelites. This is in keeping with much of other history. The overthrow of a nation and church is not averted by the reformation which often precedes it. It is a judgment brought on by the accumulated guilt of ages, and not turned aside by the comparative virtue of the age in which it is inflicted. And so the reign of good Josiah did not stay the first destruction of Jerusalem and its temple, any more

than the virtue of Louis XVI. stayed the revolution in France. There are many other examples, strikingly illustrative of the corporate methods of God's administration. All Hoshea's servilities to Shalmaneser did not avert the dethronement of the king or the captivity of his people.... The country to which the Israelites were carried at the first being Assyria gives great colour and countenance to such speculations as those of Dr. Asahel Grant, in his account of the Nestorians, respecting the present locality of some at least of the ten tribes.... Gozan is the same, it is thought, with that which Ptolemy called Ganzenities, and is now Kansehan.

7-23.—Here follows a recital of the provocations and rebellions of the Israelites, given in explanation or in vindication of the Divine procedure at this the consummation of their history in the land of Canaan: They walked in the statutes of the heathen, and also in the statutes which the idolatrous kings of Israel had made; they built them idolatrous high places everywhere, from the solitary tower of the watchman to the large and fenced city;—and all this in resistance to light, and to the voice of prophets whom God sent among them from time to time. But they would not believe; and the testimonies or remonstrances which did not reclaim only hardened them the more. Among other enormities, they crowned all by the service of Baal—a service which seems to have been discontinued for some time, but for which, nevertheless, and agreeably to the national or corporate principle on which God deals with mankind, the existing generation are reckoned with—a principle recognised by our Saviour, in Matt. xxiii. 35, when He tells the people whom He is addressing that upon their generation would come all the

righteous blood that had been shed upon the earth, and more particularly by their ancestors. This judicial manifesto comes in at the fitting place. Judah also is adverted to, but its time had not yet come. The captivity of Israel into Assyria is related to the great sin which Jeroboam had made them to sin ages before. What was thus fulfilled was just what had been prophesied.

24-31.—There is a similar lesson given to these pagan settlers in the Holy Land which God formerly gave to the Philistines who had made seizure of the ark. He thus vindicates himself in the sight of the heathen. The visitation seems to have been understood as having come from the God of Israel, whom, however, according to their own system of polytheism, they regarded as but a local though a very powerful Deity—powerful within His own domain. ...The captivity must have been so large as that all the priests had been taken away.... To teach how to fear is merely to teach how to worship. All they who feared God are several times adverted to even in the New Testament, as descriptive merely of the Jewish proselytes.... A strange mongrel religion was the result of the king of Assyria's arrangement by which he grafted so much of the Israelitish method on the old practices of these idolaters; and so they retained their own gods, who are here introduced to us according to their names of barbarous sound and character.

32-41.—It does not suit always to make priests of the lowest of the people. We can imagine an entire and energetic piety that will break its way through all disadvantages; but apart from piety, what a miserable degradation might be superadded to the desecration of the holy office!... There is an ambiguity in verses 33 and 34. The

thing meant might be, that the Assyrians feared the Lord, and served their own gods after the manner of the nations from which they had transferred themselves; or, that they did both the one and the other after the manner of those whom they, the Assyrians, had transported from Samaria, that is, after the manner of the Israelites, who did both previous to their captivity. Again, it may well be asked, of whom is it said, in verse 34, that "they do after their manners?" Some would affirm this of the Assyrians—others, of the Israelites. I should imagine the latter, were it not that verse 41, like verse 33, applies far more obviously to the new-settled invaders than to the captives. Yet the verses from 34 to 41 are descriptive of the children of Jacob; and there are commentators who so understand it. It is on the whole a troublesome passage, though the difficulty does not lie in the general meaning, but in the special and detailed application of the particular verses.

July, 1844.

2 KINGS XVIII. 1-12.—We now enter on the reign of one who stands conspicuously out among the monarchs of Judah—good king Hezekiah. It could be said of few indeed of David's successors that he did according to all which David did. The great majority of the righteous kings tolerated the high places, all of which Hezekiah swept away, and *a fortiori*, along with them the images and idolatrous groves wherewith the evil kings had replenished the land. Nay, so far did he proceed in this work of extirpation, that he destroyed that most venerable and valued relic, Moses' brazen serpent, because the children of Israel idolized it. There is something very interesting in the lengthened preservation of this monument of

former times. We are not told of its locality. The name which Hezekiah gave it seems intended to disabuse the people of their imagination of its sacredness—Nehushtan, or piece of brass.... It is probable that David forms an exception to the other kings spoken of in verse 5, he being king not of Judah alone but of all Israel. The superiority, however, of Hezekiah to Josiah is clearly affirmed here. The immediate consequence of this his righteousness was a great measure of temporal prosperity—insomuch that he felt strong enough to cast off his subjection to Assyria, and achieved victories over the Philistines.... The invasion and captivity of Israel by Shalmaneser, with the reason of his success, are here repeated in brief, being given at length in the preceding chapter.

13-25.—Sennacherib king of Assyria, who must have come after Shalmaneser, between the fourth and fourteenth years of the reign of Hezekiah, invaded Judah even as his predecessor had ten years before invaded Israel. Hezekiah took alarm, and confessed himself an offender, probably in having ceased to serve Assyria (verse 7) as the kings before him had done. With all his piety, he seems to have been of a timid and susceptible nature—for there does seem a want of confidence in God in his message to Sennacherib, and an unhallowed freedom with God's property in the offerings by which he tried to appease his adversary.

But he made nothing by these submissions. Sennacherib seems to have taken his money, yet persisted in his inroad on the Jewish territory, till he and his great army came within hearing of Jerusalem.... The insulting speech of Rab-shakeh, betrays an ignorance which is quite natural—ascribing to Hezekiah, first a human confidence in the king of Egypt; and then taking up the supposition

of a Divine confidence, and confounding the false gods, whose altars Hezekiah had, along with all false worship, taken away—confounding these with the true God, whose true worship Hezekiah had restored. There is a most haughty and irritating contempt expressed for the feebleness of Judah, as well as a false and blasphemous arrogation of a Divine warrant for the violence on which the Assyrians had entered.

26-37.—The alarm of the Jewish rulers lest the people should be influenced by this speech of Rab-shakeh, prompted the request that he would speak to them in the Syrian language—Syriacè, or, as in the original, Aramicè. The Jews at this time spoke Hebrew, but this vernacular tongue was exchanged for the Chaldee after the captivity. The request just kept Rab-shakeh more determinedly than ever by the Jewish language, in which he addressed himself to the people on the wall, so as if possible to shake their loyalty to their king, by which, however, they seem to have held fast—whether from principle or the dread of punishment from the authorities within whose reach they still were, does not appear. He plied them partly with threats and partly with promises, but without effect. They maintained a dead silence; but the rulers bore the tidings of what had passed, with a heavy heart, to their monarch.... The obstinate and idolatrous imagination of local deities breaks out in this address of Rab-shakeh; and on the strength of his victories over other lands, protected by their own deities, does he menace a like result to them, notwithstanding the protection and power of the God of the Hebrews.

2 Kings xix. 1-13.—Hezekiah again evinces his cha-

racteristic sensibility—his, I apprehend, being that soft and delicate pathology which laid him feelingly open to the impressions both of fear and of piety.... The children having come to the birth, and there being no strength to bring forth, may signify that this is the crisis of our fortune—the moment of danger and difficulty and pain—and we have not the means of such a successful extrication therefrom, as if not made good will terminate in death and destruction.... It is interesting to find Isaiah upon the stage of the direct history, whom we recognise among the highest of our scriptural authors.... Judah may well be called a remnant left, and left by Assyria, too, which had already made captive the ten tribes of Israel. The comforting message of Isaiah to Hezekiah was realized by the event. A rumour of hostility from a far country may well be called "a blast," a breath of menace and of dark portent from the quarter whence it comes. Some think the Ethiopia here mentioned to have been the one in Arabia; but it gives a colour to its having been the Ethiopia south of Egypt that in Isaiah xx. 3, 4, we have these two countries placed in conjunction, and with reference, too, to an Assyrian expedition.... It has been made a question whether the second insulting message from the king of Assyria to Hezekiah was after a conflict with Ethiopia.

14-31.—Hezekiah gives way to his piety in prayer. It is worthy of remark that God is acknowledged both in this temple made with hands, and in the creation made by His own word—as Him who "dwelleth between the cherubims," yet who "made heaven and earth." Sennacherib sent Rab-shakeh to reproach the living God. Hezekiah acknowledges the victories of Sennacherib over other nations

and their gods, but this because they were no gods; and then calls on the true God to protect His own nation and vindicate His own name. In answer to this prayer there came a message from the great Isaiah—in great part spoken in the form of a message to Sennacherib, though in reality a message of or concerning him. Among Sennacherib's other boastings he tells that he had digged and drunk strange waters, or waters not his own but belonging to others—accumulated often in reservoirs, and made to pass into them by subterraneous channels. He also says that he had dried up the rivers of besieged places, either by using them up for his own numerous army, or by diverting their courses from the cities which he blockaded. But God ascribes the glory of all these doings to himself, and tells of Sennacherib that he could do nothing unless by the permission and power that were given to him from above. The message then turns, at verse 25, from its denunciations against Sennacherib to promises and encouragements towards Hezekiah. The land had been wasted by the Assyrians—nevertheless it would spontaneously yield enough to suffice for the first year, and also for the second, which was probably the Sabbatical year. Then they were to sow and prosper—all which, though a sign after the event, would confirm still further the faith of the nation, when it so turned out.... The remnant, in verse 31, is the remnant of Judah, dispersed and destroyed to a great extent by this invasion; and so, probably, was the remnant of verse 4, and not Judah as a whole in itself, though but a relict of all Israel. Many of this remnant shall go forth of Jerusalem, where they had taken refuge.... Verse 31 admits of a typical illustration.

32-37.—Then comes the denunciation on the king of

Assyria, which was executed in some unknown but fearful manner. Not that the whole host were slain by the angel of the Lord, but a certain number here specified, on which the remainder, including Sennacherib himself, returned to his own land. Whether this destruction was by the direct infliction of a literal angel, or by a sudden disease, as a pestilence employed by God as His messenger, does not appear. Josephus says it was by a pestilence. I am always inclined to the plain and literal meaning of the Bible, when the Bible itself furnishes no correction or modification thereupon; nor would I seek in this passage for another meaning, any more than I would seek for it in the account given of the death of the first-born in Egypt by the hands of a destroying angel. When they arose early in the morning—that is, the survivors—they were all, that is the 185,000, dead corpses.... It attaches a mighty interest to the existing mound of Nineveh, when one reads of these early notices of it—as the capital and place of residence of the old Assyrians. One likes, too, so ancient a reference to Armenia, the name of which also survives to our day, and the precise locality and boundaries of which I should like to understand—as well as its direction and distance from Nineveh, whence the parricides fled after the murder of their father. And what interesting materials the Bible affords in its recorded succession of kings, for making out a connexion between sacred and profane history!

2 Kings xx. 1-11.—Hezekiah here makes exhibition again of a sensibility which seems quite characteristic of him. What a view it gives of the compassionate Jehovah, that He recalls His purpose, and grants a reprieve to the

supplicating and weeping monarch from the death which He had intimated for him—and this because He had heard his prayer and seen his tears; promising not only a prolongation of life to himself, but deliverance both of him and of Jerusalem from the king of Assyria! It is to be remarked, however, that it is for His own and David's sake—not for Hezekiah's sake—another of the many instances in which the descendants of a righteous ancestor are dealt with mercifully because of the virtues of their progenitor. Here, too, we have the example of a cure announced supernaturally, yet effected naturally, or at least with the accompaniment of visible means.... I have no demand for the explanations which are offered, with the design of imparting plausibility to the narrative of the sign upon the sun-dial—but am satisfied with the statement as it is given, even as I am with the account of the sun standing still in the days of Joshua.

12-21.—This message of the king of Babylon is stated here to have been consequent on the report that had reached him of Hezekiah's sickness. But in 2 Chron. xxxii. 31, the purpose of the message is stated to be an inquiry into the wonder that was done in the land—so that he must have been made to know in some way of the miracle of the sun's shadow having retrograded.... It appears also, from the second book of Chronicles, that Hezekiah was left to himself when he showed his treasures to the messengers from Babylon, and the reproving speech of Isaiah to him may therefore be regarded in the light of a judicial sentence, as well as a prediction uttered for the purpose of chastising and humbling the vanity of the Jewish monarch.... It is well for him to have been thankful that there was to be peace and truth in his day; though

there is somewhat of the character of selfishness, too, in his reply. The truth was to cease in the days of his idolatrous successor; or, if it did not, may have been so persecuted that the alliance between the peace and the truth was broken up.... Hezekiah ranks as the most righteous of David's successors upon the throne. He seems to have been a warlike prince at the commencement of his reign, though it would appear that he also excelled in the arts of peace, and was the author of great improvements in the metropolis.

2 KINGS XXI. 1-9.—Manasseh succeeded his father when a boy, but had a very lengthened as well as a very wicked reign. He sinned, not as Jeroboam did, but as did Ahab —who reached the highest degree of wickedness among the kings of Israel; but it is said in some of the prophets that Judah even outpeered her sister in wickedness. It seems to have been a prime enormity, both with Manasseh and Ahab, that they reared up altars for Baal. The worship of the stars, or whole host of heaven, is enumerated among the signal abominations of this reign. The building of idolatrous altars, too, in the house of the Lord, was such a sacrilegious impiety as the monarch of the other kingdom had no opportunity of perpetrating. Altogether, it is a sad and dreary record of stout and resolute profanation. The outrage that is most singled out and commented on in this black and awful catalogue, is his setting an image of the grove in the Lord's house. This may have been by a transference of the image that was in the grove (verse 3) to the temple, or the erection of another like unto it; or, finally, a representation of the grove itself.

10-26.—Here follows the denunciation of the Lord against Judah by the mouth of his prophets—because their kings had done more wickedly than the Amorites whom they had destroyed: He therefore will deal out to them the measure of vengeance laid on Israel and the house of Ahab.... The wiping of Jerusalem as a dish, and turning it upside-down, strongly marks what the severities are and must be, which God has recourse to in conducting his moral and righteous administration.... The innocent blood shed by Manasseh was probably in his capacity as a persecutor of those who bowed not the knee to Baal, and so the alliance between peace and truth was broken up in his day. Manasseh seems to have been the prince of wickedness among Judah's monarchs, even as his father Hezekiah stands at the head of David's righteous successors. He sinned pre-eminently in his own person, and was intent on the object of making Judah to sin also.... The reign of his son Amon was a short one; but the profligacy and wickedness do not seem to have been in the least abated. He came fully up to his father in the enormities of his practice, walking in all his ways and serving his idols. Yet it does not seem to have forfeited all the loyalty of his people—for, though slain by conspirators himself, these in their turn were slain by the people, and his son, the righteous Josiah, placed upon the throne in his stead.

2 Kings xxii. 1-10.—Josiah, too, walked in all the ways of David, even as his grandfather Hezekiah did—turning not aside to the right hand or to the left. He commenced his reign in early boyhood, but by the age of twenty-six entered on the good work of repairing the temple—thereby

presenting a goodly specimen of what might be done by voluntary offerings in the service of religion.... The Book of the Law—the Pentateuch as left by Moses, or as framed chiefly out of the materials left by him—must have become very scarce in these days, that the single copy of it found in the temple could be brought to Josiah as a discovery. Its contents must have been previously unknown to the king. The likelihood is that the use of it was proscribed in the days of Manasseh; and that if the people were ever in the habit previously of having copies for their own private behoof, many of them may have been concealed or destroyed under a persecuting reign. The book found in the temple may have been the autograph, or original volume deposited by Moses in or beside the ark, and preserved in the tabernacle and temple to this time. It cast up very seasonably.

11-20.—The reading of it came with all the force of novelty and alarm on the mind of good king Josiah. Well might he have been put into dismay, on contrasting the law of God with the practice of his chosen people, and on the recital in his hearing of such awful threats and denunciations as are given forth in the book of Deuteronomy! He must have seen that the truth of God was committed to the destruction of his kingdom; and accordingly, on consulting with his ecclesiastical men, and more especially with the prophetess Huldah, he found all his apprehensions verified.... It is interesting to read of a college in Jerusalem, though Poole tells us of various interpretations of it.... The prophetess confirmed the menaces of God's Book against the place and people, but ministered the same personal comfort to him which Isaiah did to his grandfather, in giving the assurance that there

should be truth and peace in his days.—"Blessed is he that feareth alway," whose heart is tender and humble, as was that of this good and righteous king!

2 Kings xxiii. 1-8.—The reading of the law made a deep impression on the mind of Josiah, under which he assembled the elders and people for the hearing of it. It adds to the picturesque effect that he is set forth as standing beside a pillar; and the whole service seems to have told with power on the consciences of those present. He had evidently their concurrence and co-operation in the work of destruction which was proceeded with immediately on the idolatrous apparatus of Baal—all its furniture and vessels having been taken out of the temple, which had been so outrageously desecrated. He also put down the priests; and whereas it is said that he brought out the grove from the Lord's house and stamped it to powder, this would seem to indicate that not an image like unto the idol of the grove, but that a representation of the whole grove itself had been placed in the temple, as if in wanton defiance to the true and only God. There were sad orgies and abominations practised in places by the house of the Lord.—Come home to my conscience, Thou Almighty Spirit, and lay open to me the exceeding sinfulness of such sins as I have committed both immediately before and immediately after Thy holy sacrament. ... The defiling of these places seems to have been accomplished by placing or burning dead men's bones upon them.

9-20.—There is a difference of treatment between one set of priests and another: Some he brought out of all the cities of Judah, probably to Jerusalem, where, how-

ever, they were not allowed to join in the services of the temple or to approach the altar of God, and of them it is said that they had burnt incense in high places. Others, again, he slew, (verse 20,) of whom it is said that they were the priests of high places. There is this difference between them, that the former were of Judah and the latter of Samaria; and perhaps this other difference that the former may have made their offerings to the true God, yet unlawfully because on high places—the latter may have made theirs to Baal. It would seem as if the idolaters had such respect to their altars and places of worship that they kept them from certain defilements, else they ceased to be fit for their religious services.... It is according to the custom of the Persians that horses and chariots should be consecrated to the sun.... It would appear, from verse 12, that there were altars made by king Ahaz which had not been destroyed by Hezekiah.... The mount of corruption is said to be the mount of Olives, and so called because covered with the fabrics and dishonoured by the rites and services of idolatry. Those on the right hand of this mount must have been on the south-east of Jerusalem.... There is here the fulfilment of the remarkable prophecy uttered in the hearing of Jeroboam; and from which it would appear, though it be not in the direct narrative, that priests, the living priests of the time, were offered, as well as the bones of men previously dead and buried burnt upon the altar.... From what Josiah did at Beth-el and Samaria, it would apppear that his power extended to these places, though beyond the limits of Judea.

21-37.—We have here a brief intimation of Josiah's having kept the passover; and how, in carrying out the directions of the newly-discovered law, he rid the land of

its various abominations. The eulogy pronounced on him in verse 25, is like that given of Hezekiah in ch. xviii. 5; so that both may be regarded as the best of all David's successors on the throne of Judah. It is said of Hezekiah that he trusted in the Lord, and of Josiah that he turned to the Lord with all his heart, soul, and might. ..We are here presented with another striking instance of that peculiarity in the Divine jurisprudence by which the sins of Manasseh are brought in judgment against a future generation—a judgment which the intervening righteousness of Josiah turned not away.... Josiah fell in early life—not forty—by the hands of the king of Egypt.

Jehoahaz, his son, lapsed into the wickedness of the evil kings; and his doing according to all that his fathers had done, leaves us at liberty to suppose that the whole guilt and enormity of Manasseh may have been revived after the death of Josiah.

And the next king (Jehoiakim) may have perpetuated this state of things—for it is said of him too, that he did evil in the sight of the Lord, according to all that his fathers had done. It is a pregnant clause—"in the sight of the Lord," who had respect unto the sin of Manasseh in his judicial dealings with his posterity. But let us also feel the bearing and application of the phrase in reference to our actual conduct.—O that we at all times judged of ourselves as God judges, and thought of what our deeds are in His sight!

2 KINGS XXIV. 1-9.—Jehoiakim, appointed king by the power of Egypt, fell under the power of Babylon, whose king, Nebuchadnezzar, prevailed over Egypt, so as to

wrest from him the possession of a number of intermediate countries. After the king of Judah rebelled against Nebuchadnezzar, it may have been at his bidding that the bands of Moabites and Ammonites, as well as Chaldeans and Syrians, made incursion upon the land—though they are said to have been sent by the Lord for the purpose of destroying Judah. He employs what instruments He pleases for the fulfilment both of His will and of His word. It was "surely at His commandment that all this came upon Judah," and according to what He had before threatened by His prophets—and this "to remove Judah out of His sight for the sins of Manasseh," and it is not said for the sins of Jehoiakim. In other words, God saw in Judah the fit subject for a judicial dealing because of the sins of an ancestor—an apt historical illustration of the doctrine of imputation: God executed judgment on Judah because he would not pardon the sins of Manasseh, the grandfather of their present king.... One should like to know precisely what the river of Egypt is. Could it be the most eastern branch of the Nile?

Let it be remarked, that Jehoiachin, who had but the short-lived reign of three months, is said to have sinned as his father had done, whereas Jehoahaz and Jehoiakim are said to have sinned according to what their fathers had done. They could not have said father in the singular of these two, the immediate sons of Josiah, without fastening the charge of having been an evil king on one of the most righteous of all who had sat on the Jewish throne.

10-20.—Nebuchadnezzar seems first to have sent his servants to the siege of Jerusalem, and then to have come in person himself. It was to him that Jehoiachin, with his relatives and functionaries, came out, giving themselves

into his hands. Then took place not only a further spoliation of the temple, but what may be regarded as the first though not the full and final captivity of Judah—yet such a one as but left the poorest of the land. He made the uncle of Jehoiachin king in his stead—the son, therefore, of Josiah—changing his name from Mattaniah to Zedekiah. He, too, did evil, even as his predecessor and nephew had, and not only so, but rebelled against the king of Babylon, who had placed him upon the throne. He did so, it is said, "through the anger of the Lord,"—*Quem Deus vult perdere, prius dementat.* That is a moral chastisement, by which one is precipitated into misconduct, which misconduct again is the proximate cause of a physical infliction—the final result, it may be, of a series of preceding transgressions. Zedekiah, because he did evil in the sight of the Lord, was prompted to rebel against Nebuchadnezzar; and this was the immediate antecedent to him and his being cast out from God's presence.

2 Kings xxv. 1-9.—The king of Babylon, naturally indignant at the rebellion of Zedekiah, whom he had himself advanced to the throne, came against him with an arm of vengeance.... The breaking up of the city, and flight of its defenders, are graphically told, while a most severe and cruel retribution was inflicted on the now-fallen and discrowned monarch. There is a refinement of torture in not meddling with his eyes till they had furnished him with the sight of the slaughter of his own children, and then putting them out. It is another specimen of the immutability of Eastern customs, that the putting out of the eyes should still be a frequent punishment of those taken in war. We read no more of Zedekiah after his

being bound in fetters and carried to Babylon, though a predecessor of his re-appears in the narrative. In about a month after the catastrophe that came upon the king was the work of destruction carried further onward on the city of Jerusalem. It is only recorded, however, that every great man's house was burnt; for though, in the preceding clause, it is said that he burnt all the houses of Jerusalem, the next clause is not additional to but explanatory of the preceding—he burned all the houses, even, or namely, (instead of *and*) every great man's house by fire: He did over again what is stated in ch. xxiv. 14—spared the houses of the poorest. But the greatest and most fatal event of this second invasion was the destruction of the first temple.

10-21.—And Jerusalem was destroyed as a place of strength by the breaking down of its walls. Not that there seems to have been an entire annihilation of the place, for though a multitude were taken away, yet the poorest of the land were left, such as might till the ground about Jerusalem while they occupied its remaining houses. But the saddest catastrophe of all was the overthrow and spoliation of the temple—as narrated here, and as most feelingly and eloquently deplored by Jeremiah in his book of Lamentations. The more bulky and less valuable articles carried direct to Babylon, seem to be distinguished from the implements of gold and silver which Nebuzaradan took the charge of. But, more calamitous than this, he took of the remaining chiefs who had been left in the city after the flight, two priests, one of them the High Priest, three door-keepers of the temple, seven officials, and sixty others besides—all of whom he brought to the king of Babylon at Riblah. His thirst for vengeance was

not yet satiated—or perhaps the thing may have been done in the spirit of a calculating and cold-blooded policy. Thus the destruction of the first temple, and the first great captivity of the Jews, were consummated.

22-30.—As Isaiah deals with the history of Hezekiah, so does Jeremiah with this portion of the Jewish history. ... We read favourably of Ahikam, the father of Gedaliah, in Jeremiah xxvi. 24. The captains who came to Gedaliah seem to have been Jewish captains, who, with their followers, had still survived the destruction that had been brought upon their country, and whom Gedaliah, now in the interest of the king of Babylon, persuaded to faithfulness and loyalty. Ishmael, however, of the Jewish seed-royal, and who could less brook the subjugation of his country, conspired against Gedaliah and slew him, besides slaying Chaldees as well as Jews. This naturally made them afraid of the power of Babylon, and he with his men, and the other captains who joined in the insurrection, fled to Egypt.

The concluding notice of Jehoiachin, who was the immediate predecessor of Zedekiah, and had been carried captive to Babylon, is interesting and affecting. The kindness shown to him was not by Nebuchadnezzar himself, who seems to have been a man of vengeance, but by his successor, Evil-merodach, and in the first year of his reign, too. It was a very long imprisonment that the poor Jewish king had been subjected to; and one cannot help rejoicing in the enlargement and comfort and distinction that, in the spirit of a relenting compassion, were conferred upon him by the Babylonish monarch—so as that all the remaining days of his life were spent in the enjoyment of abundance and liberty. This is a fair and bright gleam,

at the close of a history in which the dark and the revolting greatly predominate.

I. CHRONICLES.

1 Chronicles i. 1-4.—All Scripture is profitable; and this record of names is not without its uses. It has been turned to great account in connecting the names of persons and places, and extracting therefrom conjectures more or less probable respecting the origin and movement of nations. The genealogical process here flows downward from Adam, or in the direct order instead of reversely, as in the third chapter of Luke, or by an upward process ascending to Adam. It is the glory of Jewish history that whereas that of all other nations is involved in obscurity and fable, its first beginning can be definitely assigned; and besides this, it is connected by a clear pathway with the commencement of the world. There are abbreviations in this catalogue which must be understood to make out the full sense—that Adam begat Seth, and Seth Enos, &c. In the first three verses each name is related to the next, succeeded as father and son. Not so in the fourth verse, where Shem, Ham, and Japheth, are made to follow each other, as the names of those in distinct generations did. This list then pre-supposes such a knowledge of history on the part of the reader, as that he will apprehend Noah to be the father, and Shem, Ham, and Japheth, to be his sons, and brethren to each other. This brief passage brings down the history of the world from the creation to the flood.

5-16.—In pursuing the genealogy downward, the chronicler begins with Japheth, though the youngest of the

family, and takes up with Shem, the eldest, last. He only carries the derivations from Japheth and Ham a little way, and so as that without interruption from their posterity he may present the descendants of Shem continuously. The names of Japheth's family which might be connected with Europe are Tarshish, (Spain,) Kittim, (Chittim,) and Dodanim, or according to the Septuagint, Rhodanim. (Rhodes.) *Ροδιοι.*

In connexion with the posterity of Ham we recognise Egypt in Mizraim, and Canaan speaks for itself. In the circumstance of Nimrod being the founder of Babel, we find that Ham, so far from being confined to Africa, penetrated a good way eastward into Asia, as far at least as the Euphrates; and Palestine seems to have been all his own. The Philistines are traced immediately to a grandson of Ham; and not only are individuals but nations said to have sprung from Canaan—the very nations whom the children of Israel conquered or expelled from the land which God had allotted to them. It is interesting to mark that the Hamathites are included among them, probably as far north as the Orontes, where the city of Hamath still remains. There is a glimpse of history regarding the Caphtorims in Deut. ii. 23; and such glimpses are intermingled even with their genealogies, as here in the notice taken of Nimrod.

17-28.—Then follows the genealogy of Shem—carried downward among the generations of Israel, but with lateral branches, too, of other descendants from Abraham. Aram, in a way somewhat analogous to verse 4, is not the brother but father of those whose names follow his in verse 17, who, therefore, are the grandsons of Shem. (See Gen. x. 23.) Elam, Asshur, and Aram stand associated

in my mind with the Assyrians and Persians. Is the Asshur here named the same with him who migrated from a land whence perhaps he had been expelled by the children of Ham, and built Nineveh? (Gen. x. 11.) Verses 17-23 here are nearly the same with Gen x. 21-29.... From Eber comes the name of Hebrew, applied to the holy nation.

The genealogy recommences with Shem, and presents us with the lineal descent from him to Abraham. Elam and Asshur are not traced further down, nor indeed any other of the sons of Shem but Arphaxad; and of his two sons Joktan is only carried forward one generation, while Eber is kept by as the father of God's selected people.... We recognise the names of two of Joktan's sons elsewhere—Ophir, famous for its gold, and Havilah, also mentioned as a land of gold in Gen. ii. 11.

29-42.—A good many of Abraham's descendants, collateral to Isaac, are traced downwards, before the main genealogy of Israel is entered upon.... Nebaioth and Kedar occur as countries in Scripture.

Keturah was not properly the concubine but the second wife of Abraham, and she is so designated in Gen. xxv. 1. There is in the name of Midian, as one of Keturah's sons, a ground for referring to him the scriptural country of the same name close upon Moab; and Ephah is mentioned as a son of Midian. Now Isaiah (ch. lx. 6) classes these together, just as in the next verse he couples Nebaioth and Kedar.

Before taking up the genealogy of Israel, he presents us in brief with a certain part of that of Esau. He was the father of the Edomites; and we cannot fail to observe an identity between the names of some of his descendants

and the names of certain places, and even nations, referred to in Scripture—as Teman, and more notorious still, Amalek, a people whom God had singled out for his heaviest judgments. Seir, in verse 26, is not of Esau, but of another race, that is, of the Horites, who inhabited the land of Edom before it was taken possession of by the children of Esau. We are made to understand, from Gen. xxxvi. 12, 20, 22, that Timna, the granddaughter of Seir the Horite, through Lotan, was the mother of Amalek, a nation obnoxious to God.

43-54.—There is so close a resemblance between this catalogue of the kings of Edom, and the one we have in the passage of Genesis xxxvi. 31-39, as might incline us to think that the one was copied from the other—at least substantially, if not altogether verbally so.... There is no mention in the earlier Scripture of the death of Hadar or Hadad; but the writer of the Chronicles stood in no need of documentary evidence to assure him of this; and so he interposes the simple clause, which is not wanting in impressiveness—"Hadad died also".... It would appear from the difference in the residences of these successive kings, that they were not hereditary, but elective, or perhaps in some cases monarchs by right of conquest.... Jobab is understood by some to be the same with the patriarch Job. ... Bozrah was one of the chief towns of Idumea. (Isaiah lxiii. 1.) Teman was its capital city.... Dukes differed from kings, in that the latter wore a diadem. They were crowned chief magistrates—though perhaps they might have had no greater power than the others. The last Hadad is signalized above the others, in that the name of his wife is commemorated.... It is not clear to me whether these dukes were successive chief rulers, or the component

parts of an aristocracy, the families of which were kept up under the kings just enumerated.

1 CHRONICLES II. 1-12.—The enumeration of the twelve sons of Israel begins with Reuben, the eldest of the family; but of their succeeding genealogies the chronicler begins with Judah, it being far the most illustrious. The order of the enumeration is not in all points at one with Gen. xxxv. 23, &c.

It is remarkable that of the little pieces of history which are interposed among these names, a great proportion of them relates to the misdoings of the men of former times—a proof that the penman did not write for popularity, and did not shrink from such notices of wickedness as might serve to warn his readers, even though they went to discredit the nation, and offend the national pride—a proof of integrity in the scriptural authors. The wickedness of Er, the incest of Judah, the transgression of Achan, are all held up to view in this record. Nahshon, prince of the children of Judah, is first introduced to us in Numb. i. 7—a little more than a year after the departure of the Israelites from Egypt.... Verse 4 can only be reconciled with 1 Kings iv. 31, by supposing Zerah to have been also named Mahol, or Mahol to have been in the line of descent between Zerah and certain of those named here as his sons.

13-20.—The genealogy thickens in interest as we come down to the family of Jesse, whose pedigree here is much the same as recorded in Ruth, and his family as in 1 Sam. xvi. 6. Once for all we may advert to the difference of orthography for the same names in different parts of the Bible. Here we have Shimma for Shamma, and similar examples are quite common, more especially in

the New Testament; but in 1 Samuel Jesse is said to have sons who passed in review before Samuel ere that he called for David. There are two suppositions by Poole for evading this difficulty.... It is interesting to have the relationship again brought before us between David and Joab, who was far the most celebrated of the three sons of Zeruiah, though Abishai seems to have been the eldest. ...So David had an Ishmaelite for his brother-in-law, Jether—either an Ishmaelite by residence for a time, though by birth a Hebrew, or by birth an Ishmaelite and a Hebrew by religion.

Caleb must have been the Chelubai of verse 9. The celebrated Caleb was son of Jephunneh. The Caleb of this passage took Ephrath to wife after the death of Azubah. Jerioth, his other wife, may have been dead, or perhaps barren.... Poole says that the Bezaleel of verse 20 is not the Bezaleel of Exodus xxxviii. 22, though the names of father and grandfather are the same.

August, 1844.

21-33.—Hezron, the grandson of Judah, married at the age of threescore the great-granddaughter of Joseph Jair, though of the tribe of Judah by his father, is called the son of Manasseh, from whom he was descended by his mother. His exploits are recorded in Deut. iii. 14, and the towns he took are referred to in Josh. xiii. 30: these are in the territory of the half-tribe of Manasseh beyond Jordan. Hezron, the son of Pharez, went with Jacob to Egypt. (Gen. xlvi. 12.) Could he have died in Caleb-ephratah? Were it not better translated—"After these things Hezron died; Caleb went to Ephratah?" There are difficulties in the way of adjusting these various notices.

Such slight coincidences as between Jerahmeel of verse 25, and the Jerahmeelites of 1 Sam. xxvii. 10, have a confirmatory effect on the explorer of Scripture. And so of Caleb-ephratah being Beth-lehem—the same with Micah ch. v. 2. It appears afterwards that Sheshan had only one child—a daughter, so that Ahlai was a female; yet mention is made of the *children of Sheshan*, even as in verse 8 of the sons of Ethan, though he seems to have had only one son, Azariah. Jether, again, left no children.

34-41.—I should have remarked in the last section that Jair's marriage to a woman of another tribe must have taken place previous to that law of marriage which was brought on by the case of the daughters of Zelophehad. Not so with Sheshan, who must have flourished much later than Jair; yet his daughter, being the only child, (verse 31,) married her father's Egyptian slave, who became the father of the representatives of Sheshan's family, successively placed before us in this passage. It would appear then, that though a daughter and heiress in her own right could not marry the Israelite of another tribe than her own, yet she might marry an alien; and one sees a reason for this, in that he, not being of any tribe, there was no confusion of inheritances occasioned by this alliance. This Egyptian was in all likelihood a proselyte. Among the descendants of Sheshan, through his Egyptian son-in-law, we remark Zabad, who is recorded in ch. xi. 41 among David's chief men—so that there was nothing in his descent which prevented him from being a dignitary among his countrymen. His being called the son of Ahlai accords with the frequent practice of sonship being ascribed to those of a very distant posterity. Here, too, we have another instance of verse

according with verse in distinct places, and impressing the idea of a common groundwork of reality in the narratives of Scripture.

42-55.—Caleb is the same with Chelubai, the son of Hezron—(verse 9)—and brother of Jerahmeel. Certainly one would imagine Achsa to be identical with her in Josh. xv. 16—the daughter, therefore, of Caleb the son of Jephunneh, and who is said to be different from Caleb the son of Hezron. There are certain of those names supposed to be those of cities or tribes, rather than of individual men—as Ziph, or the Ziphites, of whom Mesha is said to be the father or founder—and so of Beth-lehem and others; but that Hebron is not the town, but a person, appears from this—that we read of the sons of Hebron. In verse 46, the one Gazez must have been different from the other—uncle and nephew—else we must suppose incest between a son and mother. Maachah was another concubine to the same Caleb, who had also Ephah for a concubine. The difficulty thickens when we come to a second—or third Caleb—that is, the son of Hur. But he was probably the grandson of Caleb the father of Hur—(verses 18-20)—Ephratah being the wife of Caleb the son of Hezron.... Shobal was the father of the inhabitants of Kirjath-jearim, or its families. (verse 53.)... There is a connexion intimated between Ataroth and the family of Joab.... From Salma sprung the families of the scribes in Jabez; but were not the scribes Levites? and might not Salma have been the founder of Jabez, or had it assigned to him—a town where Levites dwelt?... There are Kenites spoken of in Gen. xv. 19; Numb. xxiv. 21; and Judges i. 16. Jethro was a Kenite.... Of the Rechabites we read in Jer. xxxv. 2, &c.

1 CHRONICLES III. 1-9.—The lineage of David is worthy of a more full and special commemoration than all the other genealogies, as being in fact the lineage of Jesus Christ, according to the flesh. A clear case of the same individual having two names is that of David's second son, who is here called Daniel, but in 2 Sam. iii. 3 is called Chileab. There are two Eliphelets enumerated here among the sons—and altogether more than are recorded in 2 Sam. v. as having been born to him in Jerusalem. Bath-shua is the famous Bath-sheba, wife of Uriah; and the Ammiel here is the Eliam of 2 Sam. xi. 3. Elishama is the Elishua of 2 Sam. v. 15. It is remarkable how few daughters are recorded in these genealogies. Had David no more than Tamar? or Jacob and his sons no more than those whose names have been handed down to us? David had many concubines; but their children are not specified. It is probable that he may have had more daughters; but Tamar is singled out as having been famous in history.

10-24.—The genealogy here is very interesting, as presenting us, in part at least, with the common lineage of David, and of Christ, according to the flesh. The changes in names are considerable, as Abia for Abijam, and others. The sons of Josiah, several of whom occupied the throne of Judah, are here brought near together into one view.

Jeconiah was childless, and therefore they who are imagined here as his posterity were not so by natural descent, but by rightful succession, and so are understood to have sprung from Nathan the brother of Solomon.—See Jer. xxii. 24-30. The sons of Josias are spoken of as Jechonias and his brethren in Matt. i. 11, and as having

flourished at the time of his captivity. The genealogy of Luke differs, perhaps on this account, from that of Matthew, in regard to Salathiel, who is said in the one to have been begotten by Jechonias, and in the other to have been the son of Neri. (Matt. i. 12, and Luke iii. 27.) It is common in Hebrew to speak of grandsons as sons, and hence the omission of names often in these catalogues. It is difficult to say whether the names at the conclusion of this chapter represent a congeries or a succession. If the latter, then Ezra might have penned them by inspiration; or, far likelier, they might have been subsequently added.

1 Chronicles iv. 1-8.—He now leaves off the special pedigree of the house of David for the more general pedigree of the tribe of Judah. The harmony between one account and another can only be made out by suppositions. It has been well observed, that a more full account is given of the genealogies of those tribes which returned from Babylon; but still the genealogy of other tribes is not altogether omitted.

Of Ashur we read before in ch. ii. 24. By the father of Tekoah may be meant the father of the Tekoites, or founder of a place so named. There is the utmost difficulty in making out a distinct series of the representatives of different generations from these lists: names are introduced of which you cannot trace the connexion with any which precede them;—it is perhaps because they are the founders or most illustrious progenitors of families existing at the time. We know not, for example, the ancestry of Coz, but, from the information of verse 8, we know him to have been the ancestor of the families of

Aharhel, who might be interested in knowing that one of their most illustrious predecessors was named Coz.

9-20.—Yet it is not altogether a barren nomenclature that we have here; and nomenclature is not always barren —there are relieving touches, even in these chronicles of proper names. We know neither the father nor grandfather of Jabez; but he himself has not been suffered to die away from remembrance on the stream of a vanishing tradition, like the bells in a current of water. The name must have been given to him because of the extreme and unwonted labour that took place at his birth, and given by his mother to commemorate her pain, or rather her preservation from great and extraordinary danger. He is here signalized as having been more honourable than his brethren; and so he obtains a niche in Scripture history. The Jews have their own traditions respecting him, as they have of many others of whom the Bible makes but a very brief and bare mention. He was a man of piety, and of prayer that had power and prevalence with God. —O Lord, grant me enlargement from all my difficulties, and keep me from all evil, also from the depressing influence whether of fear or conscience.

This Chelub, (verse 11,) or Caleb, must surely have been different from Caleb the son of Jephunneh in verse 15. Perhaps he may have been the son of Jabez. At all events, the men of Rechah had the satisfaction of knowing from this passage a something about their ancestors... Was Jalon, in verse 17, a female?... Let us ever recollect, that dark and confused as these lists are to us, they could not be devoid of interest to those who had the independent knowledge of any name which occurs in them.

21-32.—We read of Shelah in Genesis xxxviii. 5. Was

Er, his son, named after his uncle? We have in this passage examples of an information more than the mere genealogies of families.... It is interesting to observe the notice given of the linen manufacturers, and also of the potters and those who did work for the king.... On the supposition that this Book was written by Ezra, after the captivity, the king here is conceived to be the king of Babylon, and these were perhaps his gardeners—remaining where they were rather than returning to Jerusalem. ... When it is said of some here mentioned, that they had "dominion in Moab," this is spoken of matters long past—for these men were now prosecuting their vocations in Babylon: "These are ancient things." But so, perhaps, might their employments in the service of kings be ancient too; and, perhaps, reference might be made to their occupations in Judea or Moab.

The tribe of Simeon fell greatly short of Judah in numbers, notwithstanding an occasional large family here and there. We recognise several of their towns as being in the south of Palestine. Of these towns Ziklag, in particular, became David's, (1 Sam. xxvii. 6,) though it would appear that it must have been originally in the lot of Simeon.

33-43.—Baal is in all probability the same as Baalath-beer, (Josh. xix. 8.)... Whether the names of verse 34 present a congeries or a succession, is not apparent. We have no doubt, however, that in these verses there do occur names which would be familiar and recognised in the days of Ezra, and be held by the respective tribes to which they belonged worthy of commemoration, or of having a place in Scripture: They were the magnates of a tribe which, insignificant though it was, found its place too

narrow for its people; who to make room for themselves, took possession of the territory of Gedor, inhabited of old times by the descendants of Ham. The description here given represents most graphically a land of olden times—"wide, and quiet, and peaceable:" not long so, however.... "These written by name," of verse 41, are the same with those adverted to in verse 38.... The exploit here recorded as having taken place in the days of Hezekiah, is mentioned nowhere else in Scripture, and would have vanished from the knowledge of the world, but for this brief and incidental statement of it in the Chronicles.... By "the rest of the Amalekites," is meant those who had escaped from the hands of David and Solomon.

1 CHRONICLES V. 1-10.—The birthright was given to Joseph; and he, in consequence, had a double portion—the portion of two tribes instead of one. Yet his genealogy is not given first, but that of Judah, as from him came the chief ruler—(Gen. xlix. 8, 10; Mic. v. 2; Matt. ii. 6)—so that among these names we have a prophecy regarding Christ adverted to.... The genealogy of Reuben is given here after that of Judah, because of the indelible disgrace which he had contracted.—My God, let me be alive to the moral influence of this piece of history.... Reuben forfeited his precedency in these catalogues by his misconduct; yet the birthright did not secure that precedency to Joseph, but it was given to Judah, pre-eminent among his brethren because of the illustrious progeny that came from him. In tracing downward the generations of Reuben, the point of time is noticed at which the Assyrian captivity of three tribes took place. And little fragments of history can be gathered out of these brief annals,

which are not to be met with in other scriptures—more particularly here, the extension of Reuben's conquests eastward, and by which he possessed himself of the land that bordered on the wilderness between them and the Euphrates.

12-26.—The territory of Gad was north from that of Reuben, and contiguous thereto. There is a general accordance between the names given here and those in Josh. xiii. ... Jotham of Judah was the contemporary of Jeroboam II., at least during his regency; and it was in the time of those kings that the genealogies of Reuben and Gad were reckoned. Censuses seem to have been not uncommon in these days.... The Hagarites are again introduced as the objects of a common hostility, in a war carried on against them by the Israelites on the east of Jordan—a war sanctioned by God himself, and in which His people prevailed because they put their trust in Him. These fragments of history, so incidentally preserved, lead impressively to the conclusion of how much has perished from the knowledge and memory of the world.

The half-tribe of Manasseh occupied the extreme north of the Israelitish territory in this quarter, which touched the southern extremities of Antilibanus. They are said to have been increased, and with their increase to have extended.... The rebellion and captivity of the Israelites east of Jordan seem to have been part and parcel of what befell Israel generally, as recorded in chapters xv. and xvii. of 2 Kings.

1 Chronicles vi. 1-3.—The whole of this long chapter is given to the genealogy and names of the tribe of Levi. His sons are here presented in the same order as in Gen.

xlvi. 11, and Exod. vi. 16, so that Gershon was probably the eldest of the family; yet the sons of Kohath are, here at least, placed before those of Gershon—his in fact being the important house, as having given birth to the priesthood, and to that most illustrious of all the names in the Old Testament—the counterpart of Christ in the New—the human head of the former, even as his great anti-type, the "Prophet like unto himself," was both the Divine and human head of the latter dispensation. "Gershon" is elsewhere called "Gershom"—the same name, obviously—whereas to harmonize the different lists of the same race, we must often have recourse to the supposition of the same individual having wholly different names. There is no list preserved of the descendants of Moses—it being of more importance to keep a distinct account of the generations of the priesthood; and yet many Levite families not of the priesthood are here traced downward, though the house of Moses might well have been held as the most illustrious of them all.

4-15.—This is an important record, being that of the descendants of Eleazar, of whom the great majority of the high priests were composed—though not all, as for example Eli, who was of the family of Ithamar. But with the destruction of his house the priesthood returned to the right line.... Of Zadok, and Ahimaaz his son, we read in 2 Sam. xv. 27, &c., though we are presented subsequently here with another Zadok, having near progenitors, too, of the same name with the former one.... There are three Azariahs. The second is supposed to have been contemporary with king Uzziah; and that notice is here taken (verse 10) of the resistance made by him to the king's profanation of the temple service. The priest who thus

signalized himself is named Azariah in the direct narrative.... It would appear, from ch. ix. 11, that Shallum was also called Meshullam.... There are numerous proofs of generations being omitted in such lists, so that one is often said to be the son of his grandfather, or even of a more remote ancestor: Thus, in Neh. xi. 11, Seraiah is said to be the son of Hilkiah, though here an Azariah is said to intervene. In Ruth iv. 17, it is said there is a son born to Naomi—though her grandson. It is said in 2 Kings xxv. 18-21, that Seraiah was killed by the king of Babylon. His son, Jehozadak, it would appear, however, was carried into captivity.

16-28.—The record of these descents now becomes more general, expanding, as it were, from the genealogy of the priests to that of the Levites. The practical importance of these registrations may be inferred from Ezra ii. 62, wherein we learn that certain men, perhaps having the title to be priests, yet forfeited the privilege because their names were not found in the register when they were sought after.... The book of Chronicles bears every appearance of being a compilation—to a great extent from older documents—the copying in of which exposes the work to repetitions—as in verse 16, where we have just verse 1 over again. It takes up Gershom, however, before Kohath, in giving an account of Levi's grandchildren and their descendants. In verse 43, Jahath is interposed between Gershom and Shimei—or the son in one passage is made the grandson in another. Beside this, it will be found of different lists that they cannot be harmonized without assigning different names to the same individual. ... There is an interest awakened by the name of Elkanah, and the points of resemblance between the pedigree at

this place and that of 1 Sam. i. 1. We can conceive Zophai to be Zuph; and then we have Jeroham and Elkanah as the precursors of Samuel. As a very clear evidence of different names, we have the Vashni of verse 28 expressly called Joel, both in verse 33 and in 1 Samuel viii. 2.

29-38.—We here learn that in David's time there was a regular musical service held before the tabernacle—a singing in parts and according to a certain order, each of the performers having his own assigned office.... It is pleasant to trace the connexion between certain well-known characters in Scripture, and especially when not previously aware of it. I did not know till now that Heman, spoken of in titles to the Psalms as one of the chief singers, was the grandson of Samuel the prophet. Yet who can mistake the identity of Shemuel, in verse 33, with the great prophet, when he reads over the names here and compares them with 1 Sam. i. 1?—Joel being an undoubted name of Samuel's first-born. Ebiasaph is called Abiasaph in Ex. vi. 24.... The sons of Korah are often referred to as men of psalmody in the titles to the Psalms. In this department of worship there was great room for the Levites, whose office it was to discharge ecclesiastical services distinct from those of the priesthood. It might be remarked here, that we have frequent evidence in these catalogues, of children being named after their relatives. Libni and Shimei occur among the descendants of Merari as well as of Gershom—perhaps in recognition even of so distant an affinity as that of cousinship.

39-47.—Asaph is here called the brother of Heman in the professional sense of the word. The two are of the same tribe but not of the same family or house—the one

having sprung from Kohath and the other from Gershon. Asaph's name occurs frequently in the titles of the Psalms; and he had much to do with the music of them —whether he had to do or not with the authorship and composition of any. Yet instances are not wanting where the Psalm is simply designated a Psalm of Asaph. It would appear that he was certainly not the performer only, but the penman of certain songs—for in 2 Chron. xxix. 30, we read of the Levites being commanded to sing praises unto the Lord in the *words* of David and of Asaph the *seer*—the last, too, being a title which betokens him to have been something more than a mere musician. The intermediate names between Asaph and Gershom are utterly unknown by me. It is good, however, to mark, that of the three families of Levi, there seem to have been three principal singers, and that we can not only trace Asaph and Heman in the contemporary history of David, but also Ethan, who stood at the left hand and was of the family of Merari, of whom we read, in ch. xv. 17, as having been appointed along with the two others. His father Kishi is there called Kushaiah. The name of Ethan is associated with Ps. lxxxix.

48-53.—There were many other varieties of church-service, the performers of which are not so particularly specified as those who had to do with the music. It is only said in the general, that "the Levites were appointed unto all manner of service in the house of God." There is one great exception, however, to this, ushered in by a "but" at the commencement of verse 49, and from which we learn how distinct the office of the priests was from that of all other ecclesiastical officers. They had to do with the work of the most holy place, with the offerings and the

sacrifices by which atonement was made for Israel.—What we want at present is a sufficient complement of men for Levitical work, so as to keep our ministers exclusively at the spiritual business which appertains to the inner temple—to prayer in the name of our great Propitiation—and to the preaching of Jesus Christ and Him crucified.... It is a remarkable insertion that we have here of Aaron's descendants over again—and these carried down only half-way, or to about the time of David. It looks as if the record of this book were pieced together by documentary scraps drawn up at different periods, yet deposited in places which warranted their authenticity.

54-64.—It would seem that the residences of the family of Aaron were confined to the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin, the nearest therefore to the temple, and so most convenient for those who had to take their turns in the service of it, attending thereupon by prescribed courses. There seems to have been a magnificence in the dwellings of the priests by which they were signalized above those of the Levites—at least it is only the former that we here read of as living in castles.... There is a separate and more lengthened notice taken of Hebron—that it may be shown how the assignation of it to the priests was without prejudice to the noted inheritance of Caleb. Hebron is repeated at the head of the enumeration of the thirteen cities allotted to the family of Aaron. The names do not altogether accord with those in Joshua; but cities, like people, may have had different names. Besides the family of Aaron there were other descendants from Kohath, not of the priesthood; and, accordingly, an additional provision is made for the *residue* of the posterity of Kohath, or for those who were left of that family

over and above the descendants of Abraham. It may be remarked, generally, that the Levites were located according to their three great families—so that each tribe accommodated those of but one family, and no other.

65-81.—It is not unlikely that, from verse 65, there is a more special account of the cities made over to the Levites by the children of Israel, and that this verse but records in the general what had been more specially stated of the cities given to the priests from Judah and Benjamin, adding, however, Simeon at this place. These had been already named, or "called by their names," and so are not named again. The Kohathites had cities from the tribe of Ephraim as well as from the half-tribe of Manasseh, (verse 61,) who gave only two—for of the ten cities Ephraim gave six and Dan at least two, perhaps four, (Josh. xxi. 23)—for two, said here to be given by Ephraim, are said there to have been given by Dan, which is altogether omitted in the passage before us. Then follows the list of those given by particular tribes to one or other of the Levite families.... Hebron and Shechem are the only places signalized here as cities of refuge, though Golan in Bashan, and Kedesh in Galilee, and Bezer and Ramoth in Gilead, had all of them the same distinction. There is not a perfect harmony between this enumeration and that of Josh. xxi.... This dispersion of the Levites served two purposes: It fulfilled Jacob's prophecy of their being scattered in Israel; and by the diffusion of ecclesiastical men throughout the kingdom, it better secured the religious education of the people.

1 Chronicles vii. 1-5.—There is now a genealogy presented, not of all, but of most of the other tribes. In the

name of Jashub we are presented with one of the many specimens of diversity which occur as between verse 1 here and Gen. xlvi. 13.... The number "in the days of David," here referred to, reminds one of the enumeration or census which was ordered by him, and for which he incurred the displeasure of God.... Issachar, from the account here given, seems a warlike tribe, and not of that pacific and passive character that we should infer from the blessing or prophecy of Jacob.... It should be noticed of David's enumeration that it was not chronicled, (1 Chron. xxvii. 24,) and therefore may have only passed through private hands; or there may have been a distinct local enumeration taken of this tribe.... The plural is often employed for the singular, as the "sons of Uzzi" in verse 3, though but one son is mentioned, although under the term "sons" may be included the remoter descendants.... The many wives ascribed to those of the tribe of Issachar, would seem to indicate the prevalence of polygamy among them.

6-19.—There is a fuller account given afterwards of the tribe of Benjamin. The circumstance of three sons only being ascribed to him here, when there were ten ascribed to him in Gen. xlvi. 21, and five in Num. xxvi. 38, 39, may arise from this, that here only those sons are given from whom descended the great men afterwards enumerated, and five in Numbers, as being the only founders of the families there specified, whereas all are named in Genesis.

There is a very short account given here of the tribe of Naphtali—it being carried no further down than to his grandchildren, who are called the sons of Bilhah, agreeably to a common usage.... Dan is omitted, there being only one chief mentioned in Gen. xlvi. as having sprung

from him—Hushim—who seems to have been taken up in verse 12, among the sons of Benjamin.

An Aramitess is a Syrian.... There is an intricacy respecting Maachah the wife of Machir. Whether does the sisterhood, ascribed to her in verse 15, refer to Machir or to Huppim and Shuppim? If to the latter, then the confusion is done away. It would also appear that Zelophehad, who reads here as the second son of Manasseh, was his descendant, removed from him by several generations. ... The name of Bedan, in verse 17, occurs in 1 Sam. xii. 11. Some would identify him with the Jair of Judges x. 3.

20-27.—There is a difficulty in this passage respecting Ephraim; and various methods have been fallen upon for resolving it. It seems to us the likeliest of all the solutions, that the names given in verses 20 and 21 are those of the immediate sons of Ephraim, who had the encounter described in the text with the Philistines, and so many of whom were in consequence slain. It does not appear whether this took place on the occasion of an inroad made by these Israelites from Goshen into Philistia, not far off, or in the act of repelling an inroad of the Philistines upon them. The brethren who came to comfort Ephraim must have included other relatives—for he had but one brother, Manasseh. Sherah was more probably the daughter of Beriah than of Ephraim, so as to afford time for the occupation of Canaan where many towns were built, or repaired and rebuilt by the new possessors of the country. The list of names may be so understood as to signify either the contemporaneous sons of one family, or the representatives of successive generations—that is, when the copulative *and* intervenes, as in verses 20 and 21, and the first half of 25; but afterwards the

names look more as if they occurred in the order of descent. ...Jehoshuah the son of Non is surely Joshua the son of Nun.

28-40.—We can recognise most of the towns here specified in the ordinary maps, but are not able to reconcile the site of Ephraim with what is here said of Gaza, if of the Philistines. It is perhaps the Adasa mentioned in the Apocrypha. (1 Macc. vii. 40, 45.) The towns of Manasseh on this side of Jordan are here introduced to complete the description for the children of Joseph. It should be remarked of these latter towns, that though assigned and belonging to Manasseh, they were situated in the territories of Issachar and Asher. (See Josh. xvii. 11.)

Then follows the genealogy of the tribe of Asher—a mere list of names; nor are we able to fix upon one which the Bible has signalized in any other way than by the bare mention of them;—but though unknown to us, they may have had both a contemporaneous and a traditional celebrity, which perhaps led to the assignation of a place for them in the sacred record. And, by the way, we may remark, that if this be the principle of their having been so registered, it may account for the rare appearance of women in these catalogues, leading us to conceive of many families that there were few or no daughters among them. Among the Asherites here given, however, there are two females.

1 Chronicles viii. 1-5.—We have in this chapter a more extended catalogue of Benjamites than had been previously given in ch. vii—next to Judah the most copious of all the secular tribes—partly, perhaps, because of their return along with Judah from the captivity of Babylon;

and partly because of larger records then extant—as it may be presumed of each of those tribes which furnished kings to Israel, that their genealogies would be held more sacred, and so kept with all the greater care. The variation between this list and that of the preceding chapter may be seen at the very outset, there being three sons assigned to Benjamin in the one and five in the other. This can be vindicated on the consideration that it is not the purpose of these documents to exhibit all, but only the more memorable of the names—a consideration which must operate variously on different historians. The hypothesis of different names for the same individual has already been adverted to as accounting for other variations.

6-11.—We read of the Manahethites in ch. ii. 52, 54. ... The names of Ehud and Gera remind us of Ehud the judge, who was the son of Gera and a Benjamite, and who had to do with Moab. The sons of Ehud, in verse 6, may refer either to those who go before or to those who come after him.... We see evidence here of the migrations which must have been frequent at that period—either by a spontaneous movement, as perhaps in verse 6, or at the bidding of a superior, as in verse 7—when it may be that Ehud directed away so many of his children to Manahath or elsewhere.... We read of various sojournings in Moab by Israelites, as Elimelech, and so here Shaharaim, who perhaps is the first here mentioned of a distinct race from the one given before. The likeliest account of him is that he had sent away Hushim and Baara his wives, but remained in Moab where he had children by another wife named Hodesh: not but that he had children by the former wives—for we read of his two children by Hushim, even Ahitub and Elpaal. Some, however, think that

Hodesh was Baara under another name. The notices are very brief, and to us so obscure that we are often involved in difficulties which might not have been felt in those days whether of contemporaneous or traditional knowledge of the names and the families here recorded.

12-28.—The genealogical stream flows downward through Elpaal, whose sons signalized themselves in a way that was frequent in those days—even by the building of cities. It is interesting to recognise Lod and Ono in the later histories, as at Ezra ii. 33; Neh. vii. 37, and xi. 35. ... The exploit done on the inhabitants of Gath is nowhere else recorded in Scripture, and this forms an example of the additional information which might be gleaned from these Chronicles. The names from verse 14 to verse 16, seem as if they belonged to the sons of Beriah—those again of verses 17 and 18 to the sons of Elpaal, going back to his family after having mentioned the children of Beriah, who was one of them; and, lastly, those from verse 18 to verse 21, to the sons of Shimhi, who, perhaps, is the Shema of verse 13. But the chronicler moves *per saltum* from one race to another, and so tells us of the names from verse 22 to verse 27 as belonging to the sons of Jeroham, of whom he had made no previous mention. It is well to remark, however, that he is now giving a list of those who had dwelt at Jerusalem, and who might, therefore, have been easily recognised even by those brief notices when first given in the original records from which the Chronicles were taken. The dwellers at Jerusalem, some think, are more particularly recorded, that their posterity in the days of Ezra might dwell there too—this, it appears, being a kind of merit, and which required some inducement. (Neh. xi. 2.)

29-40.—It would appear, from verse 30, that there were two of the name of Kish, uncle and nephew—one of them the son of Jehiel, the father nominally, but really the prince of Gibeon; the other the son of Ner, a son of Jehiel, though not included here as one of the family—an omission, however, supplied in ch. ix. 36. We have everywhere clear evidence of the lists being, we will not say defective, but partial, as drawn up at different times and for different purposes, according to which they were limited or enlarged as suited the occasion.

The next passage exhibits the genealogy of king Saul, as carried downward by several generations. Esh-baal is conceived to be Ish-bosheth, and Merib-baal to be Mephi-bosheth. Let it be remarked, that the only descents here given beyond Saul's own immediate family are those which come through Jonathan.... It seems to have been the peculiar *forte* of the Benjamites to excel in slinging and archery, in which the sons of Ulam are here stated to have been super-excellent.

September, 1844.

1 Chronicles ix. 1-9.—The authorities are here mentioned from which he deduces the genealogies already given—those of Israel in the book of the kings of Israel, those of Judah in the book of the kings of Judah; or did no joint book for both supply materials, seeing that the two books of Kings in Scripture are of this character?... We learn that before the captivity there were four classes—the popular, the priestly, the Levitical, and the servile classes. The same distinction may have been observed after the captivity. Israelites were mingled with Jews at the time of the captivity—for many of the former would remain in Jerusalem after the separation of the two king-

doms, and many, also, would make their escape to Judea at the time of the Assyrian captivity. The lists which follow verse 4, are supposed to be of those who returned to Jerusalem after the captivity; and there is enough of resemblance in them to the lists of Nehemiah, ch. xi., to warrant the supposition—though with many such variations, too, as we have already tried to account for. This is so far an evidence for the compilation of these books of Chronicles having taken place as late as Ezra.

10-13.—The resemblance is still kept up to Neh. xi. Jedaiah, however, is there called the son of Joiarib. The Azariah of verse 11 is the Seraiah of Neh. xi. 11. Hilkiah, though called here the father, might be a remoter ancestor, and is understood to be he who in the reign of Josiah discovered the Book of the Law in the temple. (2 Kings xxii. 8.) Azariah is not understood to be the high priest—the one in the time of Ezra being Jeshua (Ezra iii. 8)—but to have been the first under him. The list here given is much the same with the one twice repeated in ch. vi. "The ruler of the house of God," may have been as distinct from the high priest as a dean is from a bishop. There is something very noticeable in the character here given of the men who are spoken of—that is, "as very able men for the service of the house of God." They are the priests who are thus designated—distinct from the Levites of the succeeding passage, and of whom Nehemiah in his parallel description of them says that they "had the oversight of the *outward* business of the house of God." The priests had charge of a higher service, which, too, might be acquitted with various degrees of talent—and this under the New as well as the Old dispensation, agreeably to the expression of Paul, (2 Cor. iii. 6,) when he tells us of

"able ministers of the new testament."—O may Thy grace be made sufficient for the ministers of the Free Church of Scotland!

14-27.—Still a sufficient resemblance between the names of the Levites here and those in Neh. xi. 15, &c., to warrant the conclusion that they are lists of the same persons in both places. Some of these officials dwelt not in Jerusalem, but in villages, and fulfilled their weekly courses in rotation, coming after seven days from time to time. (verse 25.) The keepers of the gates were the keepers of the out-houses, or chambers at the threshold of the temple, where were deposited the treasures and sacred vessels. The same order seems to have been observed after the captivity as obtained before; and hence the references here to past times, whence they drew the model for their present arrangements. Mark how the Levites had only the charge of the gates, or charge of the entry, both in the times of the tabernacle and the temple —priests only having to do with the interior of these holy places.... The Eleazar and Phinehas here mentioned are not likely to have been the father and son of that name who succeeded Aaron. It often happened that a father who bore an ancient name gave his son the same name with the son of the ancient. We learn, from verse 22, that Samuel and David had to do with the regulation of these offices, and the fixing of their constitution. The complexity and number of the different functions and functionaries serve to impress one with the magnitude and variety of the temple service. Many of its officiating functionaries had lodging places near and about the temple.

28-44.—Was it because the ointment of the spices was

carried within the tabernacle, and was used in anointing the furniture there, that not the Levites, but the sons of the priests, were employed in its preparation? Yet the shew-bread was prepared by Kohathites.... It is obvious that the musical part of the service was made a large and important concern—done by the chief of the fathers of the Levites; and so constantly occupied were they therewith that they were set free from all other service, this being both a day and night work, so that the offering of praise was rendered continually. Such office-bearers behoved to live in Jerusalem.

The substantial identity of the concluding passage in this chapter with ch. viii. 28-38 is quite palpable. The repetition is accounted for by some in this way—that a transcriber had committed it by mistake, and to which he was led from the identity of the words which precede each passage in each of the places—"these dwelt at Jerusalem," after which he did not choose to expunge the passage, but stopped it suddenly, omitting the verses 39th and 40th of the eighth chapter.... Note, in verse 41, the italic addition of our translators taken from ch. viii. 35, *and Ahaz.*—I am glad to have learned thus far both the extent and the limits of the information afforded by these chronicles and genealogies as recorded in the Bible.

1 Chronicles x.—Let me notice the variations between this and the former historical books of Scripture, and make such new reflections on the old, or such reflections on the new subject-matter as might occur to me. The only important difference which occurs between the narrative of the first ten verses here, and that in 1 Sam. xxxi. is, that there the body of Saul is said to have

been fastened on the wall of Beth-shan, and there and here, his head in the temple of Dagon—a difference, but not a discrepancy. In all other respects the resemblance is as entire as if the compiler had read, and then written sentence by sentence, so as to have had identically the same substance in each—and with such short acts of the memory, from but one sentence to another, almost, though not altogether, the same words. I think that even an internal evidence might be constructed on the harmony with variation, which is exhibited in verses 10 and 12, as compared with 1 Sam. xxxi. 10-12. It was a seemly return of gratitude on the part of the men of Jabesh-gilead, thus to have done by Saul for what he did in their favour, as recorded in 1 Sam. xi. The chapter concludes with a more specific account of the sins by which Saul displeased the Lord, and for which he suffered death, and his family were disinherited from the kingdom, it being turned over to the new dynasty of David and his successors. Perhaps it would not have been expedient for the contemporary historian to notice what the later historian thus fully and freely brings forward.

1 Chronicles xi. 1-9.—The three first verses are substantially at one with 2 Sam. v. 1-3, save the addition of the concluding clause, "according to the word of the Lord by Samuel." And the six following verses, from the fourth to the ninth inclusive, may be regarded as an abridgment of 2 Sam. v. 6-10, in that the jeering defiance of the Jebusites is here omitted. But then we have the part recorded which Joab took in the events of this narrative, in that he went up first to the assault of Jerusalem, and was consequently made commander-in-

chief of the forces, and also in that he repaired so much of the city. We can understand how, in the earlier history, aught that was creditable to Joab should have been, as much as possible, repressed, seeing that he was extremely disliked both by David and Solomon—a feeling, however, that would not operate so strongly in later times. The effect of this his exploit, however, could not well be concealed, in that he actually became chief captain; and this mention of the fact only in one record, while the cause of it is given in another, presents just that case of a harmony with variation which confirms one's faith in the truthfulness of both.

10-19.—The last passage seems to be taken from the fifth chapter of Second Samuel, but the present, with considerable variations, from its twenty-third chapter. We should not wonder at the exploits which are here recorded, or regard them with incredulity, but have respect to the style of warfare at that period—when the matter was decided by the prowess of individuals, and not by the skilful distribution or ordering of the masses.... There is a fuller account here, in verse 10, of the important services which these mighty men in general did for David, than in 2 Sam. xxiii. 8. For the number of 300 in this place, we have 800 in Second Samuel. Lightfoot combines the two thus: He lifted up his spear against 800, and killed 300 of them.... The usual difference of names is observable here too: The Pas-dammim of verse 13 is probably the Ephes-dammim of 1 Sam. xvii. 1. The exploit of Shammah, recorded in Second Samuel, is here omitted; but the story of David's thirst is given with as great length and particularity as in the original. I am disposed to think that David's conduct here partook of a certain character

of ultraism, though doubtless it arose from a religious impulse on his part, and would certainly tend to make him popular among his warriors.

20-25.—Abishai, the brother of Joab, seems to have been chief not of the first, but the second trio of David's mighty men. The exploit of Benaiah against a lion and two lion-like men, suggests the resemblance which has often been remarked between a lion and a man of great strength and courage—perhaps a closer and more striking resemblance than any which obtains between man and any of the inferior animals. The Egyptian whom he slew is said to be of great stature here, and is called a goodly man in 2 Sam. xxiii. 21. It is said that he was honourable among the thirty, but attained not unto the first three. Did he belong then to the second, or to the trio over which Abishai presided? for if so, they assign to him a common rank with the thirty. He had clearly, however, this distinction conferred upon him, that David gave him a high and honourable office. Some, however, refer the description to Jehoiada rather than to Benaiah. Or was the valiant man of Kabzeel distinct from both of them? as it may read that he was the father of the one and grandfather of the other. Yet, from verse 24, it appears that Benaiah must have done some of these things; and, at all events, it is he who was the courtier and bore a high office in the household of David. Kabzeel was a city in the tribe of Judah. (Josh. xv. 21.)

26-47.—Then follows a list of those who are here styled the valiant men of the armies, but in 2 Sam. xxiii. 24, &c., they are presented as the thirty, Asahel being expressly said to be the first of them, after which we have thirty more names—the thirty-seven, at the conclusion of that

list, being made up of Asahel and the two trios who are before enumerated. Here, however, we have a still more extended list, made up, I should imagine, of the thirty and some more, who though not classed either with them or with those of the two trios, may nevertheless have been included as remarkably valiant men. The list in 2 Sam. xxiii. ends with Uriah the Hittite, but is carried beyond him here by a good many names. Can Shammoth the Harorite be identical with Shammah the son of Agee, the Hararite?—2 Sam. xxiii. 11—whose exploits, though recorded in Samuel, are omitted here. And has his name been repeated in 2 Sam. xxiii. 33? If so, then the enumerations will harmonize better, and take in Asahel among the thirty—whereas he behoved to stand out separately, and as at the head of the thirty, without this adjustment. We again observe the exclusion of Joab from these lists. We observe, too, an Ammonite and Moabite among the names of these chieftains—and this notwithstanding the prohibition laid upon them in Deut. xxiii. 3. Perhaps these being of David's army, did not imply that they were members of the congregation of Israel.

1 Chronicles xii. 1-7.—The historian now goes back to the time when David led the life of an adventurer and outlaw in the wilderness—while he yet kept himself close because of Saul. The description of the accomplishments of his followers, in verse 2, informs us of the style of warfare which obtained in these days, and how much it turned upon individual prowess. It is remarkable that some even of Saul's brethren were among his friends. It does not appear that Ismaiah was properly one of the

thirty; but we are to understand, from verse 4, that he was worthy to be reckoned among the thirty, as on a par with them, if not even above them. It looks as if, after the thirty and other valiant men had been enumerated, there was a recurrence to those here mentioned, for the purpose of having justice done to them, by their names too being placed in the record.... The Korhites of verse 6 do not stand alone, but are related to Jashobeam, nay, perhaps to all the names of this verse, who are described as being Korhites, or of the posterity of Kore.... The Benjamites have the very accomplishment ascribed to them here which is spoken of in Judges xx. 16. "The brethren of Saul," may imply no more than their being of the same tribe with him.

8-15.—After the Benjamites we have an account of the Gadites who came to David at Ziklag. They are described as a very warlike people, and with such personal qualifications as eminently fitted them for the toil and for the contest. This account of them harmonizes with the blessing which Moses pronounced upon them in the book of Deuteronomy, nor is it at variance with the blessing of Jacob in the book of Genesis. They are said to have "separated themselves unto David," to whom they came from afar, that is, from the other side of Jordan. They left their own homes and relatives; and perhaps it was on this occasion, though it may have been on some others, that they breasted the waters of Jordan at the time of a rapid and overflowing flood or *spate*, which made it all the more dangerous and daring. And after, or even before crossing, they may have had enemies to encounter —for Israel was greatly divided at this time between Saul and David—and overcoming them, they may have put

those on their own side to the flight eastward, and those on the opposite side to the flight westward. It would seem that the men whose names are here given were captains, some of thousands or regiments, others of hundreds or companies.

16-22.—Those of his own tribe, and of Benjamin, in near alliance with Judah, came to him; and yet we observe symptoms of suspicion toward them which he does not manifest to the others.... Can the Amasai here spoken of, be the same with the Amasa who was so foully murdered by Joab? All who came with him seem to have been made captains; but this may have been done at an after period, and when David came to his kingdom.... This jealousy of the Philistine lords is recorded in 1 Sam. xxix.; but there is nothing mentioned there of the accession of followers which was then made to him on his return from the Philistine army to Ziklag, of Manassites and others. And, indeed, as far as the growth and composition of David's strength are concerned, we have much fuller accounts here than in the earlier histories, so that the Chronicles in this instance give more than a repetition—they give a supplement to our previous informations.... Thus reinforced, he proceeded against the band of the Amalekites who had spoiled Ziklag; and, with the help of these new auxiliaries, prevailed over them. His force and interest advanced apace, so that when a way was opened for him to the throne, by the death of Saul, he was in fit circumstances for assuming the sovereignty.

23-40.—Now comes the gathering of the Israelites to Hebron. One wonders at the small number comparatively who came from Judah—David's own tribe—their locality, too, comprehending Hebron; but perhaps it was because

he could make sure of their loyalty, and they were within a call at any rate. A greater number came from the tribe of Simeon. But the encouraging circumstance was the multitude that came from the remoter tribes, which bespoke the diffusion and generality of the feeling in his favour; and I can understand how Zebulun, Naphtali, Asher, and the transjordanite tribes, should, from their very distance, be all the more actuated by a sense of the importance of a great muster.... We should not have expected the Levites to have come out in a military character; but the epidemic enthusiasm seems at this time to have overborne all. Jehoiada was not the high priest, but the leader of a military band, made up of the descendants of Aaron. Abiathar may at this time have been the high priest. (1 Sam. xxiii. 6; 2 Sam. xx. 25.)... There seems to be an explanation given here of the small number who appeared from Benjamin, that is, because of their affection for Saul's family.... There must have been some peculiar levy of those named and fixed upon that came from the half-tribe of Manasseh on this side of Jordan.... Issachar does not appear to have brought up its troops, but sent only its counsellors, who at the same time could engage for the forces over which they had the entire command. They could give politic advice to David on the present emergency.... "To keep rank" is the translation of a word which by a slight change could be turned into another word, signifying to assist —and both the Septuagint and Vulgate so render it. Altogether, it must have been a joyous and heart-stirring assemblage. It would require an immense store of provisions, both for the journeys and for the days spent at Hebron. Those nigh Hebron seem to have contributed

for the sustenance of the remote tribes; and even the oxen were made beasts of burden.

1 CHRONICLES XIII.—This narrative is also contained in 2 Sam. vi., but not without at least one novelty, and that is, the previous consultation which David held with his chief men before sending for the ark. He seems also, under the sanction of their opinion, to have laid the matter before the people at large, and to have obtained their sanction for the measure. It would appear as if the good and religious practice of consulting and inquiring after God's will at the ark of His presence had fallen very much into desuetude in the days of Saul, so that the proposed movement was with a view to reformation.... Observe the immediate and general response of the people, approving of the step as right; and we believe that when men of authority do more for what is obviously and in itself right, they may count on a ready consent thereto of the popular conscience.... The mention here of Baalah being another name for Kirjath-jearim, reconciles 1 Sam. vii. 1 with 2 Sam. vi. 2. The narrative is not produced so far here as in the parallel passage of Second Samuel.

1 CHRONICLES XIV.—The narrative of this chapter is also presented to us in 2 Sam. v. 11-25—insomuch that the one seems almost a copy of the other. The second book of Samuel seems at all events to have been used in the framing of this compilation.

The toleration of polygamy descended a great way down in the Jewish history; and it is remarkable that the inspired Psalmist, so deeply versed, one might have thought, in experimental religion, should have evinced on

this matter an ignorance which God winked at.... The Eliada of Second Samuel is here called Beeliada.

It is mentioned in Samuel that David went to the hold, when here it is said that he went out against the Philistines—which, after this intermediate movement, he actually did in the terms of both narratives.... The "images" of the Philistines in the one are called their "gods" in the other.... In Chronicles there is a supplemental sentence respecting the fame which David acquired by these proceedings, and the fear of him which God put upon the nations.

1 Chronicles xv. 1-15.—The removal of the ark from the house of Obed-edom to the city of David is narrated in Second Samuel continuously with its former removal from Kirjath-jearim to that middle place. Here the fourteenth chapter is interposed. But there is here a far more particular account of the preparations made for this second movement—which seems to have been conducted with a careful respect to the prescribed order of the Law. More especially, none were to bear it but Levites; and after the signal chastisements inflicted on those who had taken unlicensed freedoms with this sacred structure, we may well understand how cautiously and warily any further business concerning it would be gone about. David pleads the Divine appointment for his directions upon this matter. He had been effectually taught that in their first intromissions with the ark they had not observed the due order—of which he therefore now makes a special study and observation. The Levites, accordingly, were set apart for the office as being peculiarly theirs; and they are here introduced to us by the three great families,

into which they were divided, and which had each their respective functions assigned to them. It was no longer borne upon a cart, as in the two preceding journeys, but by the shoulders of the Levites, and this not around the bottom of it, but by means of staves which were put into rings, and which would rest on the shoulders of the bearers placed before and behind it. It was done "as Moses commanded, according to the word of the Lord."

16-29.—David, I should imagine, appointed the singers from all the three families of the Levites indiscriminately. Let us mark the joy which gave a character and expression to the music, and hence learn how good a thing it is to rejoice in the Lord.... Heman was a Kohathite, and Ethan a Merarite, called the son of Kishi, in ch. vi. 44.... The Obed-edom who joined in the service is certainly not Obed-edom the Gittite.... Shemiramoth is related to the number eight, and may therefore have something to do either with the number of singers, or with the notes of a musical instrument.... There is an ambiguity in the Hebrew word for song, which might answer also for carriage.

The narrative at the close of this chapter is very much the same with that in 2 Chron. vi. 12, &c., though there are clauses of variation—which is not opposition.... The story of Michal's contempt for David when she saw him mingling as he did in the song and in the dance, is here given in brief—that is, how she felt when looking at him from the window, but not the subsequent interview, when David was called forth to a vindication of his conduct, nor yet the final separation that took place in consequence between them.

1 CHRONICLES XVI. 1-6.—David sustains his earnestness

to acquit himself of this great movement in a way that might accord perfectly and at all points with the law of Moses—an earnestness, we have no doubt, set all the more on edge by the chastisements which God had inflicted on those concerned with the ark, both among the Philistines and on its journey through the land of Israel. He enforces particularly the observance that none should carry it but Levites. He made a great national solemnity of its entrance into Jerusalem, where it was set up in the place which he had previously made in readiness for it. Then they rendered to God the offering of His own prescribed ritual, by the hand of His own chosen office-bearers. .. The three first verses of this chapter present us in substance with the statements of 2 Sam. vi. 17-19. It is only said there, however, that he blessed the people, and then sent them home; but the blessing is here given at length, before which, however, we are told of his appointments for a service of which he seems to have been particularly fond, and to which he himself may be said to have been the chief contributor throughout all ages by his immortal psalmody—we mean the musical part of the service, and that both vocal and instrumental, for which he set up a sacred orchestra, the chief members and performers of which are here given.

7-22.—This Psalm is made up of a fragment from Ps. cv., nearly the whole of Ps. xcvi., but with some modifications, and the addition of two verses—only that verse 34 begins Psalm cvii., cxviii., and cxxxvi. This interchange and mutual reference that might be made between the distinct books of Scripture, goes mightily to strengthen the contexture of that evidence by which all is bound together, and all is authenticated. The whole

passage, from verse 8 to verse 22 inclusive, is substantially the same with Psalm cv. 1-15, which had been in all likelihood previously written—as well as the others which gave their respective shares to this compilation—made by David out of his own compositions, and given by him into the hand of Asaph, who only sang and perhaps composed the music, but not the words of it. The sentiments of this sacred and beautiful lyric should be grateful to our hearts on all occasions.—O let me rejoice in the work of even seeking the Lord, though I may not yet have fully found Him!... We are here told to be mindful always of the Lord's covenant, whereas we are told in the counterpart verse of Psalm cv. that He hath remembered His covenant for ever.—Let us but keep it in faith and memory; God will not forget it, nor cause His faithfulness to fail.

23-36.—Down to verse 33—this passage offers to us substantially Psalm xcvi. It looks as if David had pieced this service out of his previous compositions—altering them very slightly, and that chiefly in words, perhaps for suiting them to the music. This appears a good argument for these Psalms having been produced at some anterior stage of David's history to the one now before us. It is far more likely that this tabernacle hymn should have been made up of previous psalms, than that these psalms should have been formed or helped out from fragments of the hymn. Perhaps he was in better circumstances for the literary exercise of penning these compositions during the intervals of his irregular and guerilla sort of life, before ascending the throne of Israel, than after he was engrossed with the cares of government. At all events, we cannot but admire the wondrous variety of

David's endowments. How beautiful are the allusions of this warrior-poet to the landscapes and objects of nature! But withal how spiritual, and how realizing, and near in his approaches to God! The glory of God, as the only true God, is the reigning sentiment; and to be delivered from the heathen and from their idolatries, the great burden of the prayer. What a noble and affecting concurrence, and how blissful in all its influences upon society —when such utterances of piety as these proceed from the king, and are re-echoed, too, by all the people!

37-43—Let it be remarked, that the ark was placed on mount Zion, in the city of David, and not on mount Moriah, where the temple was built—into which it was at length introduced, but by another solemn procession and with another solemn service, in the days of Solomon. (1 Kings viii. 1.) Before quitting the business of the day, we read of the permanent arrangements made by David for the service of the temple. It is interesting to mark the intromission of the civil with the ecclesiastical power having had to do in these days *circa sacra*, though not *in sacris*. They were the priests and Levites who had to do with the latter; and king Uzziah, by stepping beyond the line of demarcation into their province, brought down a signal chastisement from heaven upon his person. Observe that it is Zadok and not Abiathar who is here mentioned (verse 39) as priest; and it would further appear from this verse that the tabernacle still abode at Gibeon, so that the ark and it were now separate, and so remained till the temple was built. There, also, (at Gibeon,) was the altar of burnt-offering, where service was daily performed according to the Law. Asaph and his brethren abode as singers with the ark, whereas Heman and Jeduthan were appointed in

the same capacity for the tabernacle. There is music in the very cadence of the narrative itself, where we read of its being their office to "give thanks to the Lord, because His mercy endureth for ever." It is probable that as Zadok presided over the altar-service in Gibeon, so Abiathar may have stayed with the ark at Jerusalem, the latter having the breast-plate of judgment. Zadok and Abiathar are both stated to have been priests in David's days. (2 Sam. viii. 17; xx. 25.)

1 CHRONICLES XVII. 1-15.—This passage, though not *in ipsissimis verbis*, yet in substance is the same with 2 Sam. vii. 1-17. No wonder that David, who at this time was making a progressive endeavour towards a right ecclesiastical as well as a right civil settlement of the affairs of his kingdom, should, after the removal of the ark to Jerusalem, meditate further a suitable fabric for the reception of it, and for the worship of God. Nathan at first participated in his views; but an arrest was laid on the proposal by God himself, who revealed on this occasion to David, that in like manner as he had not yet required a house from the Israelites in return for all the benefits wherewith he had loaded them, so still, notwithstanding the preferment and constant protection which David had gotten at His hands, instead of requiring a house *from* him, He would build one *for* him, and promised him an everlasting kingdom. There are here both a type and an antitype—a greater than Solomon is here;—and whereas the first, or literal fulfilment, has fallen so visibly short of the anticipations here held out to us, have we not a warrant for looking onward to the substantial and spiritual accomplishment of these great promises, in the

coming on of a latter-day glory? In the parallel passage of Second Samuel, the alternative—which is not brought forward here, of Solomon committing iniquity—is followed up by the threat of chastisement, yet not of destruction. The Israelites are now undergoing this chastisement, inflicted by Him with whom a thousand years are but as one day—for mercy will not depart from the house of David as it did from the house of Saul; but finally and at length will his throne be established for evermore. We read of the *sure* mercies of David.

16-27.—The resemblance is perfect, almost *literatim et verbatim* between David's prayer as given here, and the same prayer as given in 2 Sam. 16-27. The one must have been an extract from the other. The gratitude and humility of the Psalmist are alike conspicuous in this fervent effusion of his heart before God. It must have commanded the sympathies of all the people who heard it—and, full as it is of nationality, must have carried along with it all the true patriotism as well as piety of the land. We have here a striking example of the encouragement which God's promise gives to man's prayer—the one not superseding but stimulating the other: It was because God had told David that He would build him an house, that David found it in his heart to pray before Him: It was because He had promised this goodness, that therefore David prayed the Lord to bless his house, and that it may stand for ever before Him. The faith which could say—"Thou blessest, and it shall be blessed," so far from preventing, prompted the supplication, and animated it in fact with that ingredient of faith—which ensured the acceptance then, and at length the ultimate fulfilment of it.

1 CHRONICLES XVIII.—The copying from Samuel still continues, though in a somewhat freer and looser style than throughout the last chapter. The most material variation is at verse 12, where Abishai is done honour to as having slain eighteen thousand in the valley of Salt—whereas in the counterpart verse of 2 Sam. viii. 13, all the honour is given to David without any mention of his captain. The names of the towns, too, Tibhath and Chun, are variously given in Samuel—probably from the Syrian being different from the Jewish names.... It is interesting to be carried northward in Syria to places of which I have been reading in Keith, as Hamath, and Zobah, and other localities, which make it likely that David obtained, if not the possession, at least the mastery over all the countries from the river of Egypt to the Euphrates. We read here of his conquests over the Edomites in the one quarter, and over the territories of Damascus in the other. The recorder kept the history of the events, and of the government, and so transmitted the material out of which future narratives might be constructed. The scribe again was engaged with the current business, as the correspondence and daily acts of the government. These offices mark a civilization and literature which I believe signalized the Jewish above all the other nations of that period.

1 CHRONICLES XIX.—The copying of Second Samuel is continued, but not without intermission—the whole of 2 Sam. ix. 1, which recounts David's kindness to Mephibosheth, being passed over in the Chronicles.... Syria was divided into several distinct kingdoms. In the last chapter we read of Syria-damascus, here of Syria-maachah—

Maachah being probably the capital of that region. It seems to have been a small territory, as in 2 Sam. x. 6, it is said to have furnished only a contingent of a thousand men—in all thirty-three thousand. They are called "men" in Samuel, but here "chariots"—the only reconciliation of which accounts appears to be, that altogether there were thirty-two thousand men with the right proportion of chariots for such a number—these men being occasionally either riders or footmen, according to the service which might be required of them. Syria may have taken in some country on the east of the Euphrates, as we read, in verse 16, of the Syrians beyond the river. The "seven thousand men which fought in chariots," imply a greatly smaller number of chariots, but scarcely so small as seven hundred, the number specified in the parallel passage. It is the opinion of some critics that the two counterpart verses should be corrected by each other thus:—"Seven thousand horsemen, seven hundred chariots, and forty thousand footmen."

October, 1844.

1 CHRONICLES XX.—This chapter is made up, with little variation, of three fragments taken from chapters xi., xii., and xxi. of 2 Samuel. It is interesting to mark the chief intermediate contents of the earlier history which have been omitted in this compilation—the matter of Uriah the Hittite, the rebellion of Absalom, the foul act of Amnon with his sister Tamar, and the rebellion of Sheba. These, as being chiefly topics of family and personal history, were not admitted into a record which seems to have been more of a public and national character.... One cannot help being revolted by the cruelties of war in that day. It is a relief from this feeling to be told of the

possibility, that instead of the Ammonites being put to death by the saws and the harrows and the axes, they may have only been made slaves, and employed as sawyers and hewers, and even in field labour; and such interpretations are contended for by some as might warrant this understanding of the matter. By the way, there is a difficulty in regard to the weight of the king of Ammon's crown—far too heavy for being borne upon the head. Various devices of explanation have been resorted to; but the likeliest is, that instead of the crown having been put upon the head, it may only have been suspended over it.... Now that we are drawing near to the end of David's reign, we may expect to have many passages in the history of his successors not given in the books of the Kings—seeing that they mixed up the kings of Israel with those of Judah, whereas what remains of the Chronicles are exclusively taken up with the latter.

1 CHRONICLES XXI. 1-4.—The comparison between the first verse of this chapter, and the counterpart verse in Second Samuel, suggests some important reflections. Here it is said, that "Satan stood up against Israel, and provoked David to number Israel." There it is said, "that the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel, and He moved David" to number them. Does not this look very like evil coming from the Lord, not by His prompting it, but by His permission of Satan to prompt it, and who therefore may be regarded as the efficient and proximate cause thereof? Altogether, it was a judicial infliction on the part of God. He was angry at Israel, and in the execution of this anger, punished them through the medium of David's trespass, as it is here called. So that in

reference to the question of David—"What have these sheep done?" a something could be alleged, not here recorded—transgressions of their own, *for* which they were punished, though *through* a transgression of David. There is a glimpse here afforded of the Divine administration, as proceeding on a system of moral penalties—by one sin bringing on another, and this through the instrumentality of him who is the prince of darkness and adversary of the human race.

5-13.—There are various methods of accounting for the discrepancy between the enumerations given here and in 2 Samuel xxiv. 9. The one may have given the whole population able to bear arms; the other may have excluded certain classes of them. We know that in the enumeration of Numbers xxvi. the population was greatly less than this; but there is nothing in the least paradoxical or incredible in the augmentation that took place. We do not read here, as in Samuel, of Joab's progress through the country in prosecution of this census; but we read here, and not in Samuel, of Levi and Benjamin having been omitted in taking up the numbers. It rather appears, from the earlier account, that Gad's message from the Lord preceded the compunction felt by David. The voice *ab extra* brought him to a right moral perception of what he had been doing—a phenomenon this no way strange or unexampled in human life. It is wonderful what effect a judgment external to ourselves, has in clearing up our own judgment, and awakening our own sensibilities!

14-30.—Ornan the Jebusite is named Araunah in 2 Sam. xxiv. 18. The spot where David was commanded to build an altar, that is, on the threshing-floor of Ornan,

is the same with that on which the temple was built. Ornan *the Jebusite* was in Jerusalem—proving that the original inhabitants of the place were not exterminated, nor yet had merged out of sight among the Jews, by whom it was taken possession of. The narrative here is in some respects fuller than the earlier one, as, for example, our being told that Ornan saw the angel, and that his four sons hid themselves. The answer, too, by fire from heaven, and the command given to the angel to put up his sword, are mentioned here and not there. On the whole, there is greater particularity and fulness in the later account. And the three last verses are supplementary and important. The tabernacle and altar of burnt-offering, though not the ark, were still in Gibeon. But David met with such an encouraging return to the offering on the threshing-floor of Ornan, which was in mount Moriah, (2 Chron. iii. 1,) that he resolved to make this his place for sacrificing afterwards. The sword of the Lord had terrified him into the sense of an imminent necessity, so that he felt it vain to go to Gibeon; and probably when in this fear and perplexity it was that Gad the prophet, as commissioned by the angel, pointed out this threshing-floor, the place, it is interesting to remark, of the future temple.

1 Chronicles xxii.—The compiler is now done with Samuel, and as his Chronicles relate only to the kings of Judah, we may now expect a number of particulars respecting them not to be found in the books of the Kings, which are taken up to such an extent by the kings of Israel as well as of Judah. Accordingly, we have much of what is original in the chapter—the great preparations

made by David for the future temple. It must have been by the inspiration of God that he fixed on the place where he had just sacrificed as the locality of the future temple. "This is the house of the Lord God," I regard as equivalent to "here is to be the house of the Lord God." He seems to have employed strangers for much of his work, either as better artificers, or as more fit for servile drudgery than the Israelites—not that he did aught in the way of building, but only in preparations for the building, to anticipate and lighten the business for Solomon, who was yet young, and incapable. In his address to his son, he tells him of the prohibition that had been laid upon himself to build a house, and of which we have already read. The name was Solomon, because his reign was to be peaceable. This is a feeling address on the part of David, and wherein not only is Solomon told of the part he had to do in the great work, but the princes and chief men also of theirs, which was—to help by their liberalities the erection of a suitable place for the worship of the God of Israel.—Make Thy people willing now, O Lord, even as Thou didst then, to be helpful in this great cause!

1 Chronicles xxiii. 1-6.—It is said here that David made Solomon king, but, of course, in obedience to the Divine appointment, for, in ch. xxviii. 5, he himself says that God had chosen Solomon to sit on the throne.... It is said that the Levites were numbered from thirty years old and upwards. Can this mean between thirty and fifty, or all above thirty? It was in the former way in Num. iv. 3. They were dismissed from at least laborious service after they had attained to fifty; but we read here of six thousand being for officers and judges. Now,

those above fifty were fit enough, as far as age is concerned, for the latter employment. Let it be observed, that the Levites had now grown to so great a multitude that they could not have been all admitted to serve at once in their respective departments; and so they were appointed to serve by divisions or courses, at least in some of the departments, and probably in all of them. This released a very great number of ecclesiastical men, during far the greater part of their time, from the service of the temple, for other and more general services.... The first person is used in the fifth verse. Some call this a Hebraism, according to which the persons may be confounded. But might we not infer from it, that perhaps David had left memoranda in his own hand, out of which this narrative may have been partly made—and this clause, in particular, copied therefrom?

7-20.—Laadan is called Libni in ch. vi. 17. How soon does the same individual change names! Zina in verse 10, is Zizah in verse 11, but the corresponding Hebrew letters closely resemble each other.... The selection or separation of Aaron for the priesthood is narrated as the doing or appointment of God in Ex. xxviii. 1, and is referred to as such in Heb. v. 4—where he is expressly said to have been called by God to this honour.... It is very interesting to meet with the notice here given of the descendants of Moses, and to understand that they were numerous. (verse 17.) One should expect that this family would be held in great distinction—though we read very little of them. They were, however, recognised as his down to this period; and in one instance we read of one of them (ch. xxvi. 24) being appointed to an office of great trust and responsibility. Still, while we remark how

much more illustrious Moses was than Aaron in himself, it holds true that Aaron was much more aristocratic than Moses in his descendants.

21-32.—We have here an example (verse 22) of brethren having a more extended sense in the Hebrew than with us—obviously applied in this instance to cousins, this being the relationship of the sons of Kish to the daughters of Eleazar, whom they married. Sons are, in like manner, extended to grandsons or descendants in general.

After the tabernacle had been set up in its abiding place, there was no more room for the locomotive services connected with its transportation, which was a great abridgment of labour to the Levites. There would not have been employment for them all, but for the organization described in these chapters, and according to which they were made to serve in courses. We have here a general idea given to us of their various offices, in the way of being helpful to the priests. They had to do even with the sacrifices; and a very large and extensive agency seems to have been supplied by them for the musical part of the temple-worship. They stood to the priests in the relation of our precentors to our pastors. But after all there remained a deal of spare strength and time amongst them, both for educational and ecclesiastical work in the provinces; and we doubt not that in virtue of their institution, the Israelite common people were the most lettered and intellectual on the face of the earth in these days.

1 Chronicles xxiv. 1-6.—Nadab and Abihu are scarcely if ever introduced among the genealogies of Scripture,

without notice being taken of their transgression—as if to multiply the warnings against the profanation of things sacred.... David, though not permitted to build the temple, had much to do both in the preparations for this great work, and in the organization of the Levitical body, for the right ordering and distribution of the temple services. What David had arranged, Ezra had to restore and to act upon; and let us not therefore wonder at the very detailed and lengthened exposition of it which he gives here, for the guidance and information of those who were to resume those services, which had been suspended during the whole of the Babylonish captivity, and no doubt sadly distempered and broken in upon during the subsistence of a monarchy so chequered between good and evil, according to the characters of those who swayed it. Let it be observed, that though the lot was resorted to, it did not decide every thing, so as to supersede the exercise of judgment in those cases which admitted of it. The sons of Eleazar and Ithamar were not subjected to it in the lump, but separately, and after it had been fixed that sixteen should be chosen from the one house, and eight from the other.

7-19.—There seem to have been sixteen men of the one household, and eight of the other, already fixed upon as the heads of the twenty-four courses; and the object of the lot seems to have been the determination of the order in which these courses should follow each other. This seems, from its being a matter of indifference, to have been without the scope of any reason or principle on which it could be settled in one way rather than another; and so it was taken out from the judgment of man, and submitted to the lot, or rather to Him who has the disposal

thereof. It was of obvious use, too, in superseding all jealousies on the question of precedency. There is another class of cases that might be warrantably referred to the lot—not those alone which are things of indifferency, and where no reason cognizable by man can be alleged on either side; but it may sometimes happen that it is a grave and weighty matter, for which, too, there is an absolute and essential reason why it should be fixed in a particular way, but that a reason beyond the reach of human cognizance. The character and spirit of one man are often beyond the scrutiny of another man; and it may so happen as when two, for example, of seemingly equal qualifications, are proposed for the office, that the difference might, to human eyes, be altogether indiscernible. It was so when Matthias was chosen for the apostleship. The use of the lot is thus sanctioned by Scripture.... Let it be remarked, that the title of "course of Abijah," or Abia, (ver. 10,) was kept up till New Testament times. (Luke i. 5.)

20-31.—One cannot explain either the want of order, or frequent repetitions in these lists. There are informations in this chapter identical with those given in the last. In verse 23, Hebron is supplied on the evidence of ch. xxiii. 19. We are not, however, to imagine, from our difficulties and uncertainty, that there was not a purpose served by these catalogues, for the guidance and knowledge of the parties who were immediately concerned.

The Levites named in the latter verses of this chapter, seem to have been such who were attached, in the way of service and attendance, to the priests; and the object of the lots spoken of in the last verse, seems to have been to fix who of the Levites and who of the priests were to be conjoined the one with the other. The Levites cast lots

over against the priests to determine which masters were to have such and such servants, which, looked at conversely, could be settled in the form of the question by lot—which servants shall have such and such masters, by the fathers or priests casting lots over their younger brethren or Levites.

1 CHRONICLES XXV. 1-3.—The service of Asaph, Heman, and Jeduthan, was the musical service of the temple, to which David separated, for the sons of these principal singers, a number of performers under them.... The expression to "prophesy with harps," and other musical instruments, is evidence of the very general and extended meaning which this word has in the Bible. Who would think of predicting by means of such an instrument? The etymological and original meaning was to "say forth;" and as if music could speak, it is here to "sound forth" the praises of the Lord. The sons of these head men in this department were each to be placed at the head of his own separate company. Four of these sons belonged to Asaph—six to Jeduthan—and fourteen to Heman—names which occur frequently in the titles of David's psalms. Of these Asaph is the most distinguished, though a great distinction attaches to Heman, in that he was the grandson of the prophet Samuel. It should be remarked, that only five of the sons of Jeduthan are named in verse 2—though they are numbered as six. Shimei has been somehow left out here, though his name occurs in the list given afterwards of the four-and-twenty, in the order that had been assigned to them by lot.

4-7.—Heman may have been called a seer in his capacity of being a singer—even as in that capacity they were

called prophets. The horn is not usually understood to be a musical instrument. It is the symbol of power; and when men or kingdoms obtained an accession of prosperity or strength, their horn was said to be lifted, so that Heman's being a "seer in the words of God, to lift up the horn," may signify that he was the singer of those psalms and prophecies which foretold the exaltation and greatness of David and his family, or which proclaimed and celebrated the same. The whole families of these three singers seem to have been musical. What kind of instrument was a psaltery? It is placed between other two—harps and cymbals, both here and in the first verse. The daughters seem to be included with the sons as being under the musical tuition of their father, Heman. There was an educator that instructed them and their brethren in the songs of the Lord; but these may have been a selection from among their brethren, for it is added, "all that were cunning." The number twelve forming a company each, with one or other of the four-and-twenty heads, formed a total of two hundred and eighty-eight. There were twelve in each ward or class, denominated rightly a ward, because each under the guidance and guardianship of a master. Each ward had one master and eleven scholars; and the object of the lot was to determine the order that should be observed in the succession of their services.

8-31.—The first lot is said to come forth for Asaph, because Joseph, on whom it fell, was his son, so that one of his family headed the first groupe of musicians. Each groupe consisted of twelve, that is, of the head and eleven more. These eleven are said to be his sons and brethren. If these be terms of consanguinity here, then

it is likely that the brethren, agreeably to Hebrew usage, at times comprehended some who were not the children of the same parents, though within the circle of a known relationship, and chosen from among the kinsmen because of their musical talent, whether vocal or instrumental. It is possible, however, that these terms may not be significant of kindred, but may serve generally to mark the older and younger of the associates in each band. The names of this list, with the exception of Shimei, will be found at the commencement of the chapter, where the three leading families of the singers are described. There are some of the names, however, which undergo alteration, as Asarelah, in verse 2, into Jesharelah, verse 14; Zeri of verse 3, into Izri, verse 11; Uzziel of verse 4, into Azareel of verse 18, &c. The last of the changes here specified is in analogy with the two names of Uzziah and Azariah, given to the king of one or other of those names.

1 CHRONICLES XXVI. 1-8.—The porters also attended in divisions, or perhaps courses, and, at all events, were divided for the separate gates. Meshelemiah is said to have been the son of Kore, and of the sons of Asaph. Is not this the Ebiasaph of ch. vi. 37, who was the son of Korah, and of the Kohathites, and not Asaph the singer, who was a Gershonite? See also ch. ix. 19.... I may have conceived of the Obed-edom that was employed in the service of the temple as being a different person from the Obed-edom that kept the ark, because he was called a Gittite; but far more likely that none but Levites were thus employed, and that therefore, he was called a Gittite, because born there, or sometime residing there, even as

Elimelech was called a Moabite. The clause, verse 5, that "God blessed him," goes far to identify him with the Obed-edom of 2 Sam. vi. 11. and 1 Chron. xiii. 14. He was blessed in the number and strength of his sons; and, accordingly, it is after the enumeration of them that this blessing, at the end of verse 5, which refers clearly to Obed-edom, the parent, is assigned as the reason for his having such an offspring.

9-19.—There is a recurrence to Meshelemiah of verse 1 The porters seem to have been characterized by strength, which they would need to put forth in opening and shutting the massive gates, and perhaps in repressing and regulating the crowds outside.... It would appear as if the father of a family could set aside some of the privileges attached to primogeniture: Hosah gave the chiefship to Simri, though not the first-born.... The office of porter seems to have been a highly respectable one; and there was a ministry of some kind attached to it, (verse 12,) besides that of merely standing at the doors. The object of the lots was to assign the gates respectively to each band. One of them is characterized as a wise counsellor. One office might have conducted to another in these days, even as in the Christian Church, a right discharge of the deaconship might lead to the eldership, or some other good degree. From the numbers at each gate, in verse 17, there behoved to be courses, as the number required at a time did not nearly equal the numbers stated at the outset of the chapter. In regard to Simri being made chief, it may have been only in the arrangement of the porters' offices, as being stronger than his brother. It would have contravened the law of Deut. xxi. 16, 17, to have assigned to him the portion of the eldest son.... The

Shelemiah of verse 14, is Meshelemiah .... The number of porters at the east gate was greater than at any of the others—it being the principal gate and the most frequented—it being the main approach to the temple, and fronting the court where the sacrifices were offered.

20-32.—From verses 20, 22, 24, and 26, it would appear that various rulers were assigned for various treasures—which might be arranged under different heads, as the plate, and furniture, and money—and again, as dedicated from battle spoils, or by certain individuals. It would seem, from verses 20 to 28, that there was a description given of the arrangements made for the safe-keeping and disposal of the treasures of the temple; and it is interesting to meet again with the descendants of Moses as employed in this business .... Were all named after Rehabiah, in verse 25, the immediate sons of Rehabiah, and was Rehabiah a son or immediate descendant of Eliezer? There are many questions suggested by these genealogies which commentators have not entertained .... Shelomith, in ch. xxiii. 18, is the son of Izhar. There may have been two of that name .... It is probable that the treasures in kind of the temple would be kept apart as memorials of their respective donors, as Samuel, Saul, Joab, &c .... The other departments of business in this related both to the affairs of the temple and the affairs of the king. There was outward ecclesiastical as well as outward civil business. There was the work, and very distinct work too, connected with the building and repair of the temple, and the culture of its lands. And great use was made of the Levites in the civil department also .... The Hebronites were the descendants of Hebron, one of the sons of Levi; and we find them employed as rulers, not only for the business

of, and every matter pertaining to the Lord, but for the business and affairs of the king. And does not their valour, as here commemorated, imply that they might occasionally have had to do with things military?

1 CHRONICLES XXVII. 1-15.—We have here an account of David's militia, which served him in turns, very distinctly laid down in this place—that is, by sections of twenty-four thousand for each month, or two hundred and eighty-eight thousand on the whole, who did not compose a standing army, yet were kept in readiness, and were not left to forget their military exercises or habits, being each called out for a month in the year. It does not appear that though the number of these courses was the same with that of the tribes in Israel, that each separate division was taken out of the same tribe. On the contrary, we find that the captains of the seventh and eleventh courses were both of the tribe of Ephraim. In some of these courses the captains seem to have had lieutenants named, as in the second and third; and perhaps in the rest, though not named. Asahel's son is not named as under him, but as after him. From the time of his death, which was early in David's reign, we may infer that this constitution of a militia was among the first things settled by him. Most, if not all of these names, may be recognised in the lists of 2 Sam. xxiii. and 1 Chron. xi. ... Benaiah is termed here a priest; but the Hebrew word thus translated, signifies an officer or ruler.... Jashobeam was of the children of Pharez, and the chief of all the captains in precedency, not in power—for their superior in this was Joab, the generalissimo of all the forces in the kingdom.

16-22.—The functions of the rulers of the tribes are not here defined; but probably they were, in great part at least, of a civil nature. It is conceived by Poole that their office was purely civil, and that it was hereditary—whereas the military rulers were appointed by the king, because of their personal qualifications.... It is to be observed that the ruler of the Levites had no authority over the descendants of Aaron; but that they had a special ruler of their own.... Eliab is understood to be the Elihu here given as the ruler of the tribe of Judah. He was David's eldest brother; but was the princedom of the tribe in David's family before his elevation? and if not, this does not look as if it descended by succession.... Asher and Gad are both omitted in this enumeration—the former perhaps sharing with Zebulun and Naphtali—the latter with the Reubenites and Manassites of Gilead.... The ruler Iddo was the son of Zechariah—the prophet Zechariah was the son of Iddo—a presumption of its kind, that the same line of descent comprehended both, as the same names frequently recur in the succession of one and the same family.

23-34.—David perhaps appeased his conscience, as if he had done sufficient respect to the faithfulness of God's promise by not taking the number of those below twenty. Joab felt more rightly in the matter, and desisted from the work before he had finished it. Neither was the result of the census put into the national records. Then follows such a description of David's servants and office-bearers, as gives some insight into the economy of his great establishment. They were the rulers of his substance. The store-houses were the depositories of the king's tribute in various parts of the kingdom. He had

land and its produce, as well as the produce of taxes, and separate rulers for each separate kind of agricultural wealth—as one ruler over the corn-field labourers, another over the vine-dressers, another over the fruit of these vineyards, when manufactured into wine and deposited in cellars, another over the olives in the field, another over the oil in the warehouses, two over the herds of larger cattle in two different places, one over the flock of smaller cattle, one over the camels, and one over the asses. Then follow some of the rulers of David's household, and civil and military establishment. Jehiel seems to have been the family tutor. Ahithophel is brought in to mark his successors, Jehoiada and Abiathar.

1 Chronicles xxviii. 1-10.—The Chronicles now deal more in new and supplemental information; and we have here an important passage in the history of David—when he convenes an assembly of his chief men, and gives a sort of closing and farewell address to them. His idea of a temple as being but the footstool of God, argues a spiritual and elevated conception of the Divine majesty. He singles out Solomon as being the object of Divine appointment, as much as Judah was from among the tribes, or as he himself was from among the brethren of his own family. This was important, as settling men's minds in regard to the right of succession. There was the conditional grant of an everlasting kingdom to Solomon—forfeited on the event of his idolatry—yet still, we trust, to be made good in the house of David. In his general charge there occurs the pregnant phrase of "seeking the commandments," which implies the duty not only of observing righteousness, but of searching and inquiring

after it.... There is much of weighty practical theology in his special charge to Solomon.

11-21.—We find in this passage, over and above the Divine authority for the succession, the same authority for the temple, nay, for the plan and form of it. We are here told that the Spirit communicated patterns of construction to the mind of David—so that the temple was built under the same high and heavenly guidance as the tabernacle—which was framed in accordance with what God said to Moses on the mount. The enumeration of what things were thus ordered is very manifold, and distinct, and particular. The direction by the Spirit in verse 12, governs all that follows to verse 18; and David's announcement, in verse 19, refers backward to all that is detailed from verse 11. I should not conceive that God wrote down the pattern as he wrote the Decalogue, upon tables of stone; but that "by the hand of the Lord" upon David, or by impression upon his mind, He presented him with such a picture or representation of the whole scheme as he could body forth in visible exhibition to others. Solomon may have presided over the execution; but David stood to him in the relation of the architect to the builder. He had much, therefore, to do with the temple, though not so proximately and palpably as Solomon—the planning of the temple fabric, the ordering of the temple service.

1 CHRONICLES XXIX. 1-5.—The contrast between a house for God and a house for man is so put as should reconcile us to splendour and magnificence in churches—these Divine palaces. David urges the greatness of the work, with a view to the closing practical application of his

argument—an appeal to the generosity of the people, and a call upon them—not for legal but voluntary contributions. Yet let us not exclude the legal. It is true, that in as far as David gave of his own proper goods, he gave as a voluntary, and in the capacity of an individual urged on by his particular affection for the glory and service of God; but he gave also as a king and as a magistrate—or out of the royal as well as out of his own private treasure. The latter contribution was in the shape of a "moreover," or "over and above" to the former. The voluntary with him supplemented the legal; and indeed it was only on what he himself did personally, that he could rightly ground his concluding question, which was an appeal to the willingness of all the people—that they might lift up their hands to the work, whether for giving or for serving. What God hath here joined men would put asunder—as in the recent voluntary controversy, made up of two elements which ought not to have been conflicted, but compounded the one with the other.

6-19.—The response was made by giving. The joy of the people, because of their felt and conscious liberality, and the reflex joy of the king in the observation of it, are both most natural; and the outpouring of the monarch's soul is in perfect keeping with the sentiments by which he was actuated, and which are here ascribed to him. It is a very clear and substantial prayer; and such as would be uttered in the same circumstances by the most advanced and enlightened Christians of the present day. There is in it a noble strain of adoration—the ascription of all might and supremacy to God—the expression both of entire gratitude and of entire dependence—not the

elation, but the humility awakened by what they had done and rendered in the cause of the Divine Being, because endowed from on high with the ability and the willingness thus to acquit themselves—the recognition of God as the spring and fountain-head of all their wealth, whereof they were only the tacksmen and temporary holders, so that they had but given to God that which was His own—the joyful sympathy which he felt in the kindred dispositions and offerings of the people—and, finally, his prayer both for them and for Solomon his son. Altogether, it is a most precious and heart-stirring composition.... The temple is well called a palace.

20-30.—After his prayer he addressed himself to the people; and their joint prayer, under the impulse of a joint spirit, exhibits that very sympathy which, did it subsist between the higher and lower classes, would do more than all other influences put together for the cementing and the upholding of a right state of the commonwealth. Verily, were there aught like a pervading godliness in the land, all other blessings would be added to it.... In the last passage we read of David's gladness, and in the present of the gladness of the people—a mutual and common affection, which would harmonize them into one heart and one soul. It is a striking expression, that they "worshipped God and the king." The homage which we render to the Great Supreme is the pledge and the guarantee of an analogous homage to our earthly superior; and this evinces the strong affinity which obtains between religion and loyalty.... The mention of Solomon's being anointed a second time, refers us to the hasty coronation of him which took place before, when Adonijah assumed the monarchy. It is recorded only in the book of Kings; and this second

anointing is recorded only here. The circumstance of these two halves of the tally being found in separate books, strengthens the argument that is founded on their harmony.

Among the writers of David's history, Samuel could only have recorded the earlier part of it; and there seems a strong probability from this single passage, that he had to do with, and it may be is the principal author of the books which bear his name.

II. CHRONICLES.

2 Chronicles i.—The greatness of Solomon is here more expatiated on at the very outset of his reign than it is in the book of Kings; and we may look for many instances of such expansion, as the Chronicles are restricted to the kings of Judah; and its second book alone affords a greater space to them than do the two books of Kings—after deducting from them all that is therein said of the kings of Israel. His marriage, however, to Pharaoh's daughter is here omitted. In regard to the sacrifice at Gibeon, it is both new and interesting, when told of the tabernacle there being identical with that prepared by Moses in the wilderness, as well as that the brazen altar was the one made by Bezaleel. The ark, we already know, was separated from the tabernacle, and now in Jerusalem; but what had been left *at* Gibeon, drew Solomon and the people towards it; and there he performed a very large sacrificial service. No wonder that these precious relics and memorials, which had been preserved so long with religious care, should have attracted on this occasion, too, the duteous regards of the king and people of Judah!...

Then follows an abridged narrative of Solomon's dream, as also of his wealth and greatness.

2 CHRONICLES II.—Solomon's message to Huram is more fully given here than in the second book of Kings. The sentiment, in particular, of pure and high theism, in regard to the immensity of God, is here put in so as to make the king of Tyre understand that the house to be built was not so much for the accommodation of God as a place to dwell in, as for the accommodation of Solomon, as a place in which he might offer sacrifice. The qualifications of the master-builder whom Huram should send, are also more explicitly stated here, as well as the particulars of the hire.... The two last verses are important, as they establish a distinction between the employment of strangers and native Israelites. These last seem to have been the thirty thousand of 1 Kings v. 13—who were sent in courses to Lebanon—whereas the strangers, whose numbers in the two last correspond with the numbers of the two first verses of this chapter, were put to the harder and more servile work of hewers and bearers of burdens. ... The mountain from which the stone was gotten, differed surely from mount Lebanon, where the wood was gotten. ... The substructures of the temple may well convince us of the greatness of the strangers' work.

November, 1844.

2 CHRONICLES III.—The situation of the temple is given here more expressly than before—in mount Moriah, whereas the city of David was in mount Zion. Some think that this is the Moriah where Abraham offered up Isaac. At all events, it was built on the threshing-floor of Ornan or Araunah—agreeably to the predetermination of David,

(1 Chron. xxii. 1,) when he said, "this is the house," or this is the site of the house of the Lord God, and of "the altar of burnt-offering for Israel."... The figures of palm-trees were graven on the pillars of the temple for ornament; and it is interesting to remark, that this earliest written account of any architectural structure receives its best illustration from the earliest of the architectural remains to which we have access—that is, in Egypt. The parallel description to the one here given is in 1 Kings vi. The one before us gives perhaps a more powerful impression of the richness of the edifice and its ornaments, as it makes mention of the precious stones for beauty, and the gold of Parvaim.... Jachin and Boaz are names of great traditional renown.

2 CHRONICLES IV. 1-10.—Perhaps there is more of the national and less of the personal in the books of the Chronicles than of the Kings—exemplifying the distinction between public records and annals, or between history and biography.... We do not read here of Solomon's marriage, or of his own dwelling; and the description is confined to the building of the temple, in the account of which the variations between the parallel passages are scarcely worth noticing. We might mention, however, that whereas it is said in verse 3, that "two rows of oxen were cast, when it was cast," in 1 Kings vii. 24, we read of the knops being "cast in two rows, when it was cast." The difference between two and three thousand baths for the capacity of the brazen sea, should also be remarked. The lily-work was ornamental, and representative of flowers, as the palm-work was of trees. In 1 Kings vii. the account is given in greater fulness and detail—though there

is no mention made there as here of the *hundred* basins of gold. The bases and the lavers are far more particularly described in Kings than in Chronicles.

11-22.—The difficulty of following out the details of the construction as here given, whether of fabric or furniture of the temple, is practically evinced by the differences which obtain between the representations of the most eminent critics and authors, who have attempted aught like a pictorial view of them. There are certain very important parts of the scheme, however, which cannot possibly be mistaken. I shall only instance the position and attitude of the two cherubims. The pomegranates supplied other ornamental figures for the tasteful embellishment of this great edifice. The weight of materials in all things brazen was so great, that they made no attempt to ascertain it. It has been remarked of the snuffers, that these are applicable to candles, and not to lamps, where the wick, instead of being cut is drawn out, which office is done, not by snuffers but by tweezers. On the whole, the account here is substantially the same with that given in 1 Kings vii.; but it is well to compare the two, so as to extend the one by the other—nay, perhaps somewhat to modify the one by the other, as when the doors of the temple are here said to be of gold, it should be understood that all which is usually of a metallic substance, in or about doors, was of gold—and accordingly, in the counterpart passage at 1 Kings vii. 50, it is said that the hinges of these doors were of gold.

2 Chronicles v.—The ark, when removed from the house of Obed-edom, was taken to the city of David. It is said that previous to, and on occasion of, its removal

from the city of David to the temple, Solomon assembled the elders and chiefs of Israel, but that all the men of Israel assembled to Solomon—as if the former came because bidden, and the latter came spontaneously. It was a most solemn and attractive occasion, and it serves to consolidate the Jewish history, when thus carried forward from one stage to another, as if on a material pathway, and by material indices. The two tables of stone which were put into the ark by Moses, were still there in the days of Solomon, and the ark itself, with its projecting staves, was still where it was placed in the temple at the time when the second book of Kings at least was written, but not when the book of Chronicles, though at the time when the original account was written, out of which this passage was copied. This clearly evinces the Chronicles to be a compilation. There is the additional information given here to that in the book of Kings, of a general attendance of priests, though not in course, and also of singers, who gave forth sacred music on the occasion. Otherwise this chapter is substantially the same with its counterpart passage in Kings.

2 Chronicles vi. 1-11.—The chapter commences with Solomon's address and prayer, as given from 1 Kings viii. 12. One would expect, in reporting a speech or a devotional address, that the words would have been copied, as well as the meaning and substance. It is, however, not so in this instance—so that the passage here varies not in language only, but in the subject-matter of some clauses from the parallel passage in Kings. The book of Chronicles, as being more recent than the book of Kings, would probably be more accessible and more inquired after; and

it would have been wrong to have shunned the repetition of so striking a narrative in the Jewish history as that here given. It was well fitted to rivet the affections of the people, both on the temple as a divinely authorized house, and on the family of David, as a divinely authorized dynasty for the government of the nation. It is well when good is in our heart, though it may not be expedient, in our special circumstances, that by us it should be bodied forth into action and performance.

12-21.—However closely the dedication-prayer given here resembles that in the counterpart passage, yet is it so full of sentiment as to admit of a double commentary. We have here, however, the notice of that brazen scaffold on which Solomon knelt, not mentioned in the other place. It is well to remark how the pure theism of the Jewish religion maintains its consistency throughout—the sentiment of Solomon as to the soleness and supremacy of the one God being an echo to the sentiment of Moses in Ex. xv. 11—at what may be called the outset of the Hebrew economy. The reiteration of God's special promise to Solomon, in reference both to the temple and the settlement of the crown in his family, can be continuously traced from God's communication to David himself, in 2 Sam. vii. 12, to David's recital thereof when he addressed Solomon previous to his death, in 1 Kings ii. 4; and, finally, to God's direct communication with the monarch now speaking in 1 Kings vi. 12—till the monarch declares it with his own living voice, in this passage, to the assembled thousands of Israel.—See how the principle here set forth accords with Ps. cxxxii. 12; and let these repeated testimonies to the virtue of obedience counteract the freezing influences of a controversial orthodoxy, and

infuse more of vigour, and more of comfort, into the whole procedure of my own personal and practical Christianity. ... With all the virtue annexed to this glorious temple, let it be remarked how much less God is regarded as a local, and how much more as a spiritual and universal Deity, under the system of Judaism than under the Puseyism of our present day.

22-31.—The parallel passages still keep up a very close accordancy with each other. No wonder that Jerusalem and its temple were so much the objects of a common or central reference to the children of Israel—seeing that they were instructed from the outset of this great erection—and we have no doubt it became a national and long-enduring habit among them, in all cases of calamity, to direct their prayers, and their pious penitential aspirations, towards this place. When litigation broke out amongst them, and testimonies on oath had to be given—then Jerusalem, as the place of appeal, must have presented itself to the minds of those who had thus fallen into controversy. When visited by any general distress, each man was called to the work of self-examination, that he might know the plague of his own heart,—then whether the consequent prayers and vows of amendment were to be made *towards* this house, (verse 26,) or in this house, (verse 29,) still the great object of reference and regard was the temple now opened for Divine service, and now consecrating to God, by a solemn act of dedication, held in the sight and presence of many thousands in Israel. And what weighty theological sentiment is imbedded in this address—the omniscience of God reaching to the hearts of all men!

32-42.—The men of all nations were free to look towards

Jerusalem, or come up as proselytes and worship there: —this is an advance beyond that of the ultra-Judaism which would confine the privileges of religion to a particular nation; but an advance beyond this again is when, instead of looking towards an earthly sanctuary, we are led to look upward to the tabernacle in the heavens, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God. Another parenthetic, but most weighty sentiment, occurs in verse 36—the universality of sin in our species. It is well that we have this fundamental doctrine in the remedial system of the Gospel—and it is well to have it as amply attested in the Old as in the New Testament. (Prov. xx. 9; Eccl. vii 20, &c. &c.)... The case of the people taken captive, and looking towards Jerusalem, reminds us forcibly of that most pathetic and beautiful Psalm—cxxxvii.... It is pleasant to observe how the devotional and historical pieces of Scripture are interlaced with each other. Mark the substantial identity of the concluding verses of Solomon's prayer with Psalm cxxxii. 8-10. Solomon avails himself of this precious composition in the grand ceremonial of ushering the ark into the temple.

2 CHRONICLES VII. 1-7.—There is no notice taken in the parallel passage of Kings, of the fire that came down from heaven to consume the sacrifices—whereas there, and not here, we have the impressive benediction which Solomon poured forth upon the people.... It is well to note, that in this later period of the Jewish history, there came down as striking and miraculous an attestation from heaven as took place in the wilderness, when Aaron sacrificed at the door of the tabernacle. (Lev. ix. 24.) And as then so now, the people responded with their adorations and

praise—and this in words which frequently occur in the Psalms, and which seem as if taken from them. It is probable that by this time the people were familiar with the choruses of these sacred compositions; and in Psalm cxxxvi. the endurance of God's mercy is the subject of a chorus. The musical service also of this occasion is related here only—performed by Levites whom David had appointed. (1 Chron. xv. 16.) It was by their ministry that David sounded forth his own hymns of praise; and we have little doubt that even so early as at the dedication of the temple, they were devotional pieces of his which made up the psalm-book of the children of Israel.

8-22.—The solemnity closes as in the parallel passage, though with some variety of expression; and we cannot but advert again to the happy state of a commonwealth, where high and low are harmonized into one common enthusiasm in behalf of what is right.... The next passage respecting the Lord's appearance to Solomon, is given with somewhat greater amplitude. The choice of the temple as His house, which God announces in verse 12, is closely analogous to the premonition which Moses gave of it to the children of Israel in Deut. xii. 5.... From verse 13 to verse 16 there is new matter presented to us in the communication which God made to Solomon. There is the promise of God's forgiveness on the repentance of the people—or that on their humbly and honestly praying for acceptance, He will hearken to the voice of their supplication, and withdraw His chastisements and "heal their land."—The virtue here annexed to prayer in this house, we know to be possessed by all prayer uttered in the name of Him who called His body "this temple"—even the body that was destroyed and raised up again in three

days. Let our faith and hope then be in God, who hath raised Christ from the dead. But O save us from that sin unto death, that sinning wilfully—after which there is no more sacrifice for sin.... Let it be observed, that much of the answer, as recorded here, is in the terms of the prayer that was lifted up. Compare verse 15 with ch. vi. 40; verse 18 with ch. vi. 16. On the other hand, the threatenings are but the reiterations of what had been uttered in old times, as in Lev. xxvi. 14, and Deut. xxviii. 15. See also Deut. xxix. 24.

2 CHRONICLES VIII.—Solomon's expedition to Hamath-zobah is peculiar to the Chronicles; and connected therewith we have the building of Tadmor, which we read of before. It is truly interesting to think of him as the founder of Palmyra. The geography harmonizes well with his doings in this northern quarter, and they warrant the conclusion that his dominion extended to the Orontes on the north, and to Euphrates on the east. And he not only extended his power beyond the old limits, but strengthened and increased it within these limits—as may be seen from the tribute that he levied on the remaining aborigines of Palestine—including, it is likely, the payment of money, but at all events, as in the parallel passage, (1 Kings ix. 20, 21,) the exaction of a bond-service peculiar to them, and not laid on the children of Israel.... The two hundred and fifty of Solomon's officers are reckoned at five hundred and fifty in the Kings.... In regard to the house for Pharaoh's daughter, see my remarks on 1 Kings ix. 24.... His setting up and continuance of the temple service are here more fully given. The narrative of this passage closes as in the parallel

one; but when numbers are concerned, then the variations are more frequent. We read formerly of four hundred and twenty talents of gold, and here of four hundred and fifty.

2 CHRONICLES IX. 1-12.—The controversy is, whether the Queen of Sheba—a country to the south of Judea—was queen in Arabia or Abyssinia. Sir William Harris, who has travelled and published on the Highlands of Ethiopia, tells me his own opinion to be, that she was sovereign on both sides of the Red sea, which would compound and reconcile the two theories.... It is interesting to mark the progress of hearsay in these remote ages—as when the Canaanites and Philistines were made aware of the miracles of Egypt, and the Queen of Sheba heard of the wisdom of Solomon in her own distant land.... It is remarkable how plentiful gold was in these days. Both sacred and profane historians attest this. What profusion of it, for example, is set before us in the account we have of treaties and largesses and ransoms, from Gibbon's Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire. In verse 12, which might be compared with 1 Kings x. 13, we read that Solomon gave unto the Queen of Sheba whatever she asked, *beside* that which she brought. It may be understood that he gave more than she brought: Such was the royal bounty that he gave more than she asked, and more in value than he got from her. The two parallel narratives of this visit are very nearly coincident.

13-20.—The parallel accounts in the books of Kings and Chronicles, are almost the duplicates of each other. The figure of the throne is so lucidly described, that it might be easily transferred into a picture; and yet how

various are the plans and representations given by different authors of the architecture and furniture of these royal and sacred edifices. It is very likely, however, that Solomon's ascent to his throne was through an avenue between lions, with their faces towards each other, and placed at the ends of the steps, which rose to an elevated pedestal, whereon the chair of state was erected, with a lion on each side, as the supports which connected the chair with this raised platform. The magnificence seems to have been quite unrivalled—so as to call forth the admiration, and perhaps the envy, of other kings and other kingdoms. It is said that none of the vessels were of silver—or it may be rendered, there was no silver in them, no alloy, agreeably to the previous clause, that all "was of pure gold."... We read much of the imports from other countries. I should like to know what were the exports—for I presume that much was brought in commercially, and not by the compulsion of a levy or tax from the territories over which the Israelites had acquired a dominion. The chief export, as to Tyre, must have been agricultural produce.

21-31.—This passage presents another opportunity for discussing the situation of Tarshish. There is ground, from what has preceded in former places of Scripture, and what is presented in the place before us, for concluding that the Tarshish here spoken of is not to be sought for in or by the Mediterranean. There will be further occasions on which more fully to consider the question.... The numerical discrepancies are very great and numerous. The four thousand stalls, in verse 25, are reckoned at forty thousand in 1 Kings iv. 26.... The extent of the dominion is given here, and not in the parallel place of 1 Kings.

It harmonizes remarkably with the promise made to Abraham in Gen. xv. 18. Only what is called there "the river of Egypt," is called here "the border of Egypt." Does not this incline more to the view of that river being further east than the east branch of the Nile? There can be no mistaking what is here called the river Euphrates, particularly named so, indeed, in the foresaid promise to Abraham. And so it would appear, that there was at least a brief and temporary fulfilment of the promise in all its original extent respecting the territory of Israel—of which, however, they were soon abridged because of their sins, but in which I trust they will again be fully invested at the period of their restoration.... These references to books that have now perished are very interesting.... The degeneracy of Solomon, and the misfortunes of his later years, as given in Kings, are here omitted.

2 Chronicles x.—It is chiefly now that we begin to look for a more expanded history of the kings of Judah—seeing that there remain twenty-seven chapters of Chronicles, whereas the remaining chapters from the parallel place in Kings amount to thirty-six. But then, so large a portion of these is taken up with the history of the kings of Israel, and with the doings of Elijah and Elisha, that we may expect much additional information before us respecting the monarchs of the house of David. The whole of this chapter, however, which constitutes the outset of the peculiarly Jewish narrative, and from which the Israelitish part of the story is excluded, is not a literal but substantial copy of the counterpart narrative in the second book of Kings—so as to impress the conviction that it was not written by a separate and original inspiration, but taken, no doubt

by the direction of inspired wisdom, from the previously existing history. The one is not taken from the other word by word, but as like as possible to being taken sentence by sentence, with such minute deviations therefore in the language, as were natural in the brief acts of memory, from one glance at the original to another. There is much in this phenomenon of the likeness and unlikeness between Kings and Chronicles, that favours my own idea of the method of inspiration.

2 CHRONICLES XI. 1-12.—Now begin the larger additions to the history of the Jewish kings—that is, from the fifth verse of this chapter—the first four verses being counterpart to 1 Kings xii. 21-24. We learn from the passage before us, that Rehoboam, after having returned to Jerusalem, abode by it; and that now, shut out from the territory of the ten tribes, he directed his attention to the strengthening and filling up of the territory which remained to him. One can understand how he should have felt himself reduced to the necessity of thus strengthening the things which remained; and this, accordingly, was the policy which he adopted, and he gave himself to the intense prosecution of it. He now had only Judah and Benjamin upon his side, and perhaps Simeon too, who lay to the south of him—though, being in a manner detached from the rest of Israel, and incorporated with Judah, besides being himself of small account, he is not mentioned here.... The towns built for defence, "the fenced cities," are said to have been in Judah and Benjamin, not in Simeon, which lying asunder from the hostile tribes, needed no more in the way of fortification than before. These fortified holds were manned and stored both with armour and

provisions, for the express purpose of standing such sieges as they might now lay their account with.

13-23.—The remaining information of this chapter anent Rehoboam, is almost all additional. We see how the facts recorded here tally with the fears expressed by Jeroboam in the Kings, lest Judah should be strengthened by the tendencies of Israel to Jerusalem, and the worship of the true God. We are persuaded that such other harmonies could be traced between these records as would yield a strong confirmatory argument in favour of both. It is not improbable that Jeroboam would have liked the adherence of the Levites, could he have obtained their consent to his idolatries; and hence his profane ordination of unauthorized men to the priestly office, which would still further scandalize the genuine ecclesiastics; and we can well understand how in their convergency to Jerusalem, they should have been followed to such an extent by the lovers of the true religion.... The righteousness of Rehoboam's reign for its first three years, his marriage especially to his cousin, the daughter of Absalom, his numerous family, his policy in the distribution of them, and finally his uxoriousness, are all additional points of information. Let it be observed, that Absalom here is called Abishalom in 1 Kings xv. 2.

2 Chronicles xii.—We are now told of Rehoboam's degeneracy, after a righteous and prosperous administration of three years, during which he strengthened himself and established the kingdom. It was expressly because of his transgression that Shishak came against him from Egypt. His forces and his victories are here particularly specified. It was in the fifth year of Rehoboam's reign,

or the second year of his rebellion against God, that this invasion took place.... The prophetic message to Rehoboam, and his consequent humbling of himself, are additional topics of information, and so is the Lord's determination because of this—not utterly to destroy him—although he was brought into servitude under the king of Egypt, that he might taste the difference between the service of the Heavenly King, and that of the earthly kings by whom he was surrounded. Bating this subjection to a foreign power, things went well in Judah. Internally it prospered. The evil of Rehoboam's deed, and the want of godliness in his heart, are instructively stated here. In the Kings, reference for other parts of the king's history was made to the chronicles of Judah. Here, again, a further reference is made, and more especially to the book of the prophet Shemaiah, who had been sent to him with word from the Lord. All, however, is preserved respecting him which the Spirit of God held necessary for our admonition in the latter ends of the world.... The importance of these chronicles, as part and parcel of our Bible, is now becoming more manifest.

2 Chronicles xiii. 1-11.—Grandmothers are sometimes termed mothers in the Hebrew—so that the way to reconcile the discrepancy here with 1 Kings xv. 2, is by supposing Abijah, or Abijam's grandmother, to have been the daughter of Absalom, and his immediate mother to have been her daughter, married to Uriel of Gibeah.... We have here another important and precious enlargement of history, in that the war with Jeroboam, only mentioned generally before, is now given particularly.... The eight verses of the account of Abijah's reign in the Kings, is

expanded to this whole chapter in the Chronicles. It is a marvellous force that Abijah mustered on the occasion; and the numbers on both sides indeed argue a mighty increase of population. The address of Abijah is instinct with good principle. Although we have been previously told that he was one of Judah's wicked kings, yet he could affirm his superior religiousness over Israel—true probably of his kingdom, though not of him. The public service of God was better kept up at all events.... The "covenant of salt" is in all likelihood a covenant made by sacrifice, which was always salted.... Abijah had good ground for reproaching Jeroboam with his idolatry and desecration of God's appointed priesthood, but not to boast of his not having personally at least forsaken God, though he might truly allege the outward conformities which he here enumerates to the manner and worship of their fathers. It was a good speech, however, *ad captandum populum*, and was perhaps of effect in encouraging his own army, and disheartening that of the Israelites—perhaps seducing, or at least paralyzing many of them.

12-22.—This, too, is new history. The signal victory which is here recorded, is expressly said to have been effected by God, as a deliverance from Jeroboam, and because the people of Judah relied upon the God of their fathers. The presence and performance of their priests must have given it still more palpably the character of a special intervention from heaven in their behalf—constituting it such a manifestation as tended to confirm the faith of all true worshippers, and still farther to condemn the ungodly and idolatrous, on whichever side they stood in this great battle, where the loss of the vanquished reached the

enormous number of half a million. It is worthy of remark, that the partial and far from perfect obedience of Judah, obtained for them the support and favour of the God of battles; for, though far from deserving it, the difference between them and Israel was such as to make the victory of the former fulfil the purpose of a Divine testimony.... The might of Abijah is brought peculiarly out in this narrative, as is also the state and numbers of his family—along with the degradation of Jeroboam's power, and his death as a direct infliction upon him by God's own hand.

2 Chronicles xiv.—And in like manner Asa occupies but half a chapter in the Kings, and takes up three chapters in the Chronicles. There is much, therefore, of new information—as the quietness of the land for ten years—the commandment on the side of God's law, which he gave forth to the people—the removal of the high places out *of all the cities*, though it would appear from Kings that all the high places of the land were not removed—the building of fenced cities during the periods of national tranquillity—and the amount of his forces.... The invasion from Ethiopia, also, is altogether peculiar to this book. These Ethiopians, assisted as they were by the Lubims, (ch. xvi. 8,) who are associated with the Egyptians in ch. xii. 3, were probably the African Ethiopians. There has been discussion and doubt respecting the numbers; but it is interesting to find that Robinson has pretty well made out the situation of Mareshah, between Hebron and Gaza, and to observe how much in keeping it is with the geography of Gerar. This is a very important passage in Jewish history, preserved to us by this Scripture alone.... The prayer

of Asa, and the consequent victory granted and achieved, as we are expressly given to understand, by God Himself, affords a striking exhibition of the theocracy which still rested upon the kingdom.

2 Chronicles xv.—The preternatural visit of Azariah to Asa, marks strongly the theocratic economy under which the Jews were placed.... The whole of this chapter is peculiar, with the exception of verses 16 to 18, which present us with what we had before in Kings.... There is much of the unction of theology in the inspired message to Asa, who must have been greatly encouraged by it to the work of reformation. There had been a great cessation of the true religion both in Judah and Israel, from the degeneracy of Solomon. But it applies more exclusively and specially to Israel; and particularly then—being without a teaching priest and without law. The exposure of these deficiencies would suggest to Asa the main heads of a reformation in his own kingdom.

It is interesting to mark the attachment of so many, even in the nationally revolted Israel, to the worship of their fathers. This must have been a great strengthener to Judah, and helps to explain how the two tribes should have coped so well with the remaining ten.... The joy of the people when the king and all his subjects participated in a good and right principle, is exemplified under Asa as under some other of the righteous kings.... There might be no more such a general war as that with the king of Ethiopia, till the time meant in verse 19; and yet there may have been a constant interchange of petty hostilities between Judah and Israel, along their frontiers. (1 Kings xv. 16).

2 Chronicles xvi.—There is a still more serious discrepancy in verse 1 than that in the last verse of the last chapter; for here it is said that Baasha came up against Judah in the thirty-sixth year of Asa's reign, whereas in 1 Kings xv. 33, we read that Baasha began his reign in the third year of Asa, and reigned only twenty-four years. See Poole for the attempts at reconciliation—attempts not successful, at least to me not satisfactory. There are some few inexplicables which must be acquiesced in, and which no more obscure the light of revelation, than do its spots the light of the sun.... It is remarkable that Baasha's leaving Ramah is mentioned both in Kings and Chronicles, but his dwelling in Tirzah only in Kings. The former information concerned the kings both of Israel and Judah; but the latter was Baasha's affair, and concerned Israel only. It is pleasing and confirmatory to remark the coincidence of such little traits with the general purport of the respective works.... The message of Hanani, instinct with sound practical theology, and the misconduct of Asa, are both peculiar and additional, as also his funeral obsequies. In seeking not to God but to the physicians, he betrayed the same want of faith that he did in seeking for the help of Syria against Israel, when he should have relied upon God.

2 Chronicles xvii.—And the account of Jehoshaphat, too, is greatly more copious here than it was in the former history—more especially as it regards the internal administration of his kingdom.... The object of the numerous fortifications raised all over Judah by its kings, is here distinctly brought out—to "strengthen themselves against Israel."... The first ways of David, in which Jehoshaphat

walked, might refer to David's life previous to his sins, in the matter of Uriah, and in numbering the people. Or, "the first ways of his father David" might be rendered, the "ways of David and first ways of his father" (Asa), of whose early virtues and subsequent degeneracy we have just been reading. "His heart was lifted up in the ways of the Lord"—actuated by lofty desires for His honour, and lofty resolutions, that he and his people should serve Him. Altogether this is a most precious chapter.... We read elsewhere of the king giving orders for the instruction of the people when assembled in Jerusalem, but of no other Jewish king do we read that he prosecuted this work throughout the country at large, and so as to carry instruction to the doors of all the families. And princes also were employed to teach—a work for which their education may have qualified them; but whether they did this directly or not, their influence and authority might ensure attendance on the lessons of the priests and Levites, as well as protection to these functionaries when officiating in their duties.—Let me abjure the voluntaryism that would dissever the government of a nation from the religion of a nation.... The spirit of Jehoshaphat descended to his servants, as to Amasiah, (verse 16,) and we doubt not to many others.

2 CHRONICLES XVIII. 1-5.—The riches and honours of Jehoshaphat are adverted to in the last chapter, (verse 5,) and in close connexion with the Lord's favour to him, because of his obedience. The strength and prosperity of his kingdom, whereof the proximate cause was his own wise and vigorous administration, must be referred to the great and primary author of all our blessings—as also his

security from the invasion of enemies, on whom the fear of the Lord fell, so that they made no war against him. (ch. xvii. 10.) This makes his abuse of the Divine goodness all the more wonderful, in that he should have joined affinity with Ahab—his co-operation with whom is related here in very much the same terms that it is in 1 Kings xxii. Ahab's hospitable reception of him is more particularly narrated in this place, for this is Jewish history, though Ahab had to do with it—whereas the three years' peace, mentioned in 1 Kings xxii. 1, between Syria and Israel, belongs exclusively to the history of Israel, which is not the subject of these Chronicles.

6-24.—It has been said that perhaps one cause which led Jehoshaphat to seek for other prophets, was the ambiguity of the deliverance just given. "God will deliver (it) into the king's hands"—a sort of Delphic ambiguity, which leaves undecided both what the thing was, and into whose hands to be delivered. The parallel narratives of this memorable passage in history are as nearly as possible alike to each other in substance. Yet, after deducting all the repetitions, there remains a deal of original and peculiar matter in the Chronicles which is of exceeding value—especially in the second book, where we often meet with most signal manifestations of the still subsisting theocracy. It is true that we have also these manifestations in the Kings, but more generally of God's displeasure—for there is a far greater proportion of recorded wickedness in the history which includes the kings of Israel along with those of Judah. And, accordingly, in the messages of Elijah and Elisha, and the other prophets of these earlier books, what we chiefly meet with are the denunciations of God's wrath and predictions of evil—

whereas in the late books, which are confined to the kings of Judah, we have in the account of those of them who were good, intromissions—if we may so speak—between heaven and earth, of a more pleasing character—such, for example, as those which are set before us in the last chapter, where we read of God's direct favour to Jehoshaphat, and of the safety and prosperity which were given to him, and from the Divine hand too, (ch. xvii. 5-10,) expressly because of his righteousness. In this book there is a deep impregnation of sacredness.

December, 1844.

25-34.—The similarity of the two narratives is still kept up with an important peculiarity—even its being said here not simply that his assailants left Jehoshaphat, as we read in Kings, but that the Lord helped him, and God moved them to depart from him.... The Divine interposition in behalf of a righteous king of Judah is expressly noticed in this history of the kings of Judah, though not adverted to in the other history, which though partly, is not appropriately and exclusively theirs. This is but one out of so many similar examples.... It is further worthy of remark, that the protection of the Almighty is still given to them because of their righteousness, though it was but a partial and imperfect righteousness. Jehoshaphat was doing wrong at the moment of this deliverance being vouchsafed to him, for he sinned in joining forces with Ahab, yet God would not on that account cut him off utterly. There is encouragement in this, not for sinning, but for hoping, even in the conscious recollection of sins past—not, most assuredly, in or with the purpose of sins future.

2 CHRONICLES XIX.—Jehu, who rebukes Jehoshaphat, is the son of Hanani who rebuked Asa.... It now comes out that the conduct of Jehoshaphat in joining forces with Ahab is displeasing to God. The love of them that hate the Lord is a very decisive test of at least one ungodly affection—for it is obvious in this instance, that it did not exclude other good things from the mind of the king—not even the preparation of his heart towards God, and so while wrath was upon him—to the effect no doubt of a chastisement—yet in consideration of what righteousness he had, it was the chastisement of a father.... God's respect even to a partial and defective obedience, is worthy of being noted as a characteristic of His administration. It is all the more remarkable here, that Jehoshaphat seems to have repeated the offence for which Jehu rebuked him, by joining forces with Jehoram, as recorded here, but not in 2 Kings iii. But with these faults in his doings abroad, he was great in the affairs of his internal government. ... The court of justice in Jerusalem was administered by men who described circuits, and did the central business when "they returned to Jerusalem." The Levites were employed in a judicial capacity in things civil and criminal, as well as ecclesiastical.... The distinction between the matters of the Lord and the king's matters—the one presided over by an ecclesiastical and the other by a civil ruler—seems to warrant our own principle of anti-erastianism, which by no means excludes the aid and influence of the monarch—here so effectually bestowed on all the departments wherewith the interest and prosperity of a kingdom have to do.

2 CHRONICLES XX. 1-13.—"*Other* besides the Ammonites"

is not sustained by Poole as the right translation. He refuses to admit the *other*, and would translate "besides" differently, so as to conjoin the Mehunims (ch. xxvi. 7) with the Ammonites.... There are Bible chronologists who assign the same year to this invasion of Judah by the Moabites, &c., and the joint invasion of Moab by Judah and Israel. (2 Kings iii.) If so, the one invasion may have been a reaction upon the other. En-gedi, or 'Ain-gedi, is on the west side of the Dead sea. The invaders were from the countries on this side of Syria, understanding that Syria extended greatly to the south, between Euphrates and the people bordering on Jordan and the Dead sea. Some of the auxiliaries were from mount Seir. Certainly the war in 2 Kings iii. is so broken off in the description of it there, as was not unlikely to be followed up by such an incursion as we now read of.... It is well to mark the religiousness of Jehoshaphat, akin with what we read of other good kings, and far more abundantly in this Second Chronicles than in the parallel places of the other history. The prayer of Jehoshaphat is partly drawn from, or refers to the prayer of Solomon at the dedication of the temple. Altogether, the pleading and the petition are those of a devout and spiritual mind, that could found its arguments with God on the olden history of Israel, and is the genuine emanation of a true and faithful worshipper —a most blessed and beneficial effusion in the hearing of so many people.

14-19.—This passage fully sustains the character which we have ascribed to all that is new and peculiar in the narratives of this book—as the record of a visible and acknowledged Providence, and charged throughout with the spirit of godliness. The Spirit descended on one of

the most distinguished among the families of the Levites, whose brief but energetic address has in it an unction of religiousness, and is fitted to direct the regards and confidence of the people from the earthly to the Spiritual—from dependence on an arm of flesh to immediate dependence upon the true God.... A sermon adapted to all ages and states of the Church may be given forth from the words—"Be still, and see the salvation of God;" and there is something most impressive in the obedient response given to the pious sentiment by Jehoshaphat and his people, and this, again, followed up by the praises and hosannas of the ecclesiastical men.... The cliff of Ziz seems to have been identified by Robinson.

20-37.—This, too, is a most genial passage for the pious reader. Tekoa is on the way from Jerusalem to En-gedi.... Mark the coincidence here between the religious services of Jehoshaphat and his people, and the instant aid given by God for their deliverance. The ambushments here spoken of imply, according to some, the agency of angels. (2 Kings xix. 35.) Or it may signify that God set the Ammonites, Moabites, and Edomites to plot against and destroy each other. In counterpart to verse 20, see Isaiah, ch. vii. 9. It was a most signal deliverance, and all the brighter that it was followed up by more than the gratulation, even by the gratitude of the people, whose joy on the occasion took the right direction of praise and blessing to the Most High. And mark how it is said "that it was God who gave him rest, that it was the Lord who fought against the enemies of Israel."...There are still names that remain as traces of Berachah in the neighbourhood of Tekoa.... Jehoshaphat resembled Asa, not only in certain of his offences, but in his repetition—

even as Asa relied first upon the Syrians, and afterwards upon physicians, rather than upon God, so did his son, even after he had been rebuked by Jehu, commit over again the offence of joining with Jehoram, and afterwards with Ahaziah—both of them wicked princes—for which last we read here both of his rebuke and his chastisement. ... We read of Jehu the son of Hanani, in 1 Kings xvi. 1.

2 Chronicles xxi. 1-11.—This chapter presents a good specimen of the extension which the history of Judah's kings receives in the Chronicles, over and above what we read of them in the Kings. The names of the other children of Jehoshaphat, besides Jehoram—gifts which they received—their murder by the wicked hands of their own brother—his deleterious influence over the people in seducing, even compelling them, to idolatry—the writing of Elijah that came to him—the invasion of his country by foreign enemies, and the disease which carried him off —these are all additional matters respecting him to what we had formerly. Of what a murderous spirit ambition is, all history, both sacred and profane, gives ample evidence.... It is probable that idolatry is meant in verses 11 and 13, as that which the king caused his people to commit. Yet, as the literal wickedness there named often constituted part of the idolatrous service, we may understand it in this sense also. The compulsion which he so atrociously brought to bear upon his subjects in this matter, argues an unwillingness and reluctance on the part of many of them, which makes the part enacted by him, the immediate successor of a righteous king, and having to do in consequence with so many righteous persons throughout his kingdom, all the more enormous.

12-20.—Elijah had been translated before his writing could be received by Jehoram; and this has given birth to various explanations. The one I most go in with is, that it may have been bequeathed to Elisha as a written prophecy, and sent at the fitting time by him to the Jewish king. And things ulterior to the time at which the document was received, are there made the subjects of prophetic announcement—as the pestilence that was to come upon the land, and the disease that was to carry off its monarch.

"The Arabians that were near the Ethiopians," are understood by some to signify those who had emigrated from the Asiatic, and settled on the African side of the Red sea. Others affirm, that on the eastern side of the sea there were Asiatic Ethiopians.

We may well understand how odious Jehoram must have rendered himself to a nation that had so recently been trained, by the righteous Jehoshaphat, to a veneration for the true God of Israel, and to the knowledge and observance of his laws. He died, "not desired," and not honourably buried. His tyrannical compulsions on the side of idolatry, must have been peculiarly offensive to those who had been brought up under the better regimen of his predecessor on the throne.

2 Chronicles xxii.—In this book we have the expansion, too, of Ahaziah's former history. There is the same ambiguity respecting Athaliah as in the Kings—leaving it uncertain whether she was the sister or daughter of Ahab. The brethren of Ahaziah, of whom we read in ch. xxi. 17, as having been taken, were afterwards slain by a troop, probably of robbers, that came to the enemy's camp.

We read more expressly here than before of Ahaziah being led astray by his maternal relatives, who acted as his counsellors, and after whose counsel he walked. He seems to have had two names, being called Azariah in verse 6. In ch. xxi. 17, he is called Jehoahaz, but this is by transposition the same with his common name. It would appear also from ch. xxi. 2, that there were two Azariahs in the family of Jehoshaphat.... Agreeably to the general habit of this book, God is recognised—as in the destruction of Ahaziah, as having been of Him.... There must have been some good thing in Jehu and his people towards God, in that they not merely felt a general zeal against Baal, but in that they buried Ahaziah for the sake of Jehoshaphat. The house of Ahaziah could not at this time keep the kingdom in a settled state within their family; the royal dignity having passed from the blood-royal of Judah to a wicked woman of the house of Ahab.... I do not enter on the chronological difficulty connected with the second verse.

2 Chronicles xxiii. 1-15.—We have here additional points of information respecting the enthronement of Joash—such as the previous going forth of his friends over Judah, and the general convention thence of the Levites in Jerusalem, as also the chief of the fathers in Israel—many of whom, though without the precincts of Judah once, may, from attachment to the worship of their fathers, have come to settle there. The argument of Jehoiada was grounded on the grant of the kingdom to David's sons, and that therefore Joash should reign, not Athaliah, of the house of Ahab.... "The gate of Sur" in 2 Kings xi. 6, is called here "the gate of the foundation."

The people were suffered to occupy the courts; but none, save the priests and ministering Levites, were to enter the temple. These arrangements of Jehoiada imply great confidence in the popular attachment to his cause. And so we are told that not only did the Levites, but all Judah do according to his appointment. He had need of them all, and so he dismissed not those whose turn it was in ordinary times to leave, for their successors in the rotation.... That part of the ceremonial which consisted in giving to the king the testimony on the day of his coronation, is generally understood to be putting into his hand the book of the law, Deut. xvii. 18, 19. Save a few amplifying clauses, the narrative as regards Athaliah is very much the same with that in the Kings.

16-21.—There was a twofold covenant made by Jehoiada—first, between the Lord on the one side, and both the king and people on the other—and, secondly, between the king and the people.... I should say of the book of Kings, that it was more of a political, and of the book of Chronicles, that it was more of a religious history; and that this accounts for a number of expletive clauses to be found in the latter, and not in the former narrative. And so in the passage before us we have ecclesiastical matter that we have not in the parallel place of Kings, which confines itself to the civil. Thus we have notice given here of the temple observances, as David had arranged them, of which we read in 1 Chron. xxiv., and also as Moses had appointed. Every reference to his law is most valuable, as binding together the later with the earlier Scripture history, and thus serving for the authentication of both.... It is pleasing to observe the joyful character of many of the Jewish services, along with the strict and

guarded ceremonial which debarred the entrance of all that was unclean into the Lord's house. Let us mix trembling with our mirth.

2 CHRONICLES XXIV. 1-14.—There is here, too, an extension of the former history, and some additional peculiarities—as Jehoiada taking for Joash two wives, and of his sons and daughters. A priest having to do with this speaks something more than his bare toleration of polygamy.... The laudable measure of the repair of the temple, seems to have originated with the king himself, verse 4. There is also notice given here of an aggressive deputation, that travelled through the country for money, as well as a collection at the door of the temple. The sluggishness of the Levites on this occasion, is very like to the sluggishness of our own ecclesiastics in the matter of subscriptions, both for church extension some years ago, and now for the support of the Free Church.... One can understand how the sons of Athaliah should, under her influence, have been wholly in the interest of Baalim. If by them were meant the sons she had by Jehoram, their spoliation of the temple must have taken place before their captivity, and in their father's lifetime. ... To harmonize verse 14 with 2 Kings xii. 13, we must suppose that the collection money was not given in the first instance for the making of gold and silver vessels, but all made over to the workmen for the repairs of the house, who, after their faithful performance of the same, returned the unexpended surplus in their hands, which purchased, or rather which constituted the material of these utensils for the service of the temple.

15-27.—It was an extraordinary age that Jehoiada

reached for that period of the world, and after David had given forth his deliverance of threescore years and ten as the average of those advanced in life. His funeral is here represented as an homage on the part of the authorities to his goodness, it being on that account that he was buried in the city of David. But this did not hinder the influence of bad advisers after his death, to whom the king gave ear, and was misled into a sad declension, the particulars of which are only given here, it being merely hinted at in the parallel narrative.... The remonstrances of prophets, sent to warn and to reclaim, had no effect upon them; and worst of all, the inspired message of Zechariah, the son of Jehoiada, was resented, and followed up—at the commandment of the king, too—by his violent death. The dying imprecation of the prophet was followed up by a speedy execution at the hands of the Syrians, whose invasion is only mentioned generally in the Kings, but judicially in the Chronicles, and as an infliction upon Judah for having forsaken God. This is in keeping with the usual spirit and character of this later narrative.... It is evident that the book of Kings here referred to, is not our present canonical book, but some other, and probably more copious record, that has now perished.

2 Chronicles xxv. 1-13.—The passage from verse 5 to verse 11 forms an interesting addition to the history of Amaziah—wherein, beside the enumeration of his own forces in Judah, we are told of his having a hundred thousand mercenaries from Israel, and of the prophet's remonstrance because of this. It was a most natural grudge in the mind of Amaziah, that he should have given so much for their services, and yet should part with

them after all. However, he did rightly in obeying the prophet. And, on the other hand, it was most natural for the dismissed soldiers to feel as they did, and take revenge for the affront on the cities along their way. But had this been on their return home, it would have been on the way from Beth-horon to Samaria, instead of—which it is said to have been—on the way from Samaria to Beth-horon —whence it is conjectured that this retaliation did not take place till after the report of Amaziah's cruelty, and of the spoils he had gotten on the expedition which they were not permitted to share in, had reached the disbanded Israelites; and that then, giving way to their resentment and envy, they fell on the cities which Judah still retained in their borders, and slew three thousand men of them. It is in keeping with this that the account of the violence done by the Israelite soldiers comes after the account of the violence done by Judah against the Edomites.

14-28.—The powerful and insidious temptations of idolatry got hold of Amaziah, so as fully to justify the character given of him at the outset—that though he did that which was right, it was not with a perfect heart. It is only here that we read of this lapse, and of the prophet's consequent denunciation, which Amaziah met with so much hardihood.

It might have been the provocation of the violence committed by the soldiers of Israel against some of his towns, of which we read here, and not in the Kings, that incited Amaziah to send the hostile message to Joash, of which we read alike in both narratives. When the details of the filling up or the extension in the one history are in good keeping with the heads of the more general outline or synopsis in the other history, it serves to authenticate

both. It is always a favourable circumstance when two distinct narratives are found to piece well together. Furthermore, we are here peculiarly told that Amaziah's resolutely persisting in his quarrel with Joash was of God, and a judicial infliction upon him for seeking after the gods of Edom.... This book abounds greatly more than its counterpart in relations of the intromissions which took place between God and the kings of Judah. We read of Obed-edom, in connexion with the temple, in 1 Chron. xxvi. 15. One of his name—perhaps a descendant—must at this time have had some such charge over the treasures of the house, as we read of in 1 Chron. xv. 20-28. It serves to distinguish the Chronicles, that whereas in 2 Kings xiv. 19, the conspiracy is recorded singly—here, in verse 27, it is stated to have taken place "after the time that Amaziah did turn away from following the Lord." ... There are no acts recorded of Amaziah in our present books of the kings of Judah and Israel, which are not recorded here. The other acts here spoken of in verse 26, must have been recorded in some other book of these kings, which book, however, may probably have furnished materials to the canonical ones.

2 Chronicles xxvi. 1-15.—The history of Uzziah is here greatly expanded beyond the very brief and general summary that we before had of his reign. The Eloth which he seems to have built immediately after the death of his father, is understood to have been the city on the eastern bay of the Red sea—an evidence of the extent of his power.... The Zechariah here spoken of was not the canonical prophet of that name, but it is thought he was the son of the Zechariah whom Joash slew. Uzziah must have

been a person of imperfect piety, even as his father Amaziah was. We are here characteristically told that his prosperity, which was very great, hinged on his seeking after God. In the bright period of his reign he greatly signalized himself, both as a warrior and as an economist in the matters of interior administration. But it is not omitted "that God helped him," and that thus he was enabled to strengthen himself exceedingly. One likes to read of his love of husbandry; and the towers he built in the desert were probably for the shelter and protection of those who were engaged in pastoral occupations. The respect and consideration in which he was held by foreign powers, his successes in battle, the force and enginery of his military establishment, and the extent of his agricultural wealth, mark him out as a truly energetic prince and patriot. Still it was because "marvellously helped" from above that he became strong.

16-23.—The leprosy of Uzziah, which is stated in the Kings simply as an event, is here, as we might now be prepared to expect, recorded as a judicial infliction laid upon him by the displeasure of a justly offended God. It was because his heart was lifted up to his destruction, and he dared to outrage the holy place, that this sore visitation came upon him. He was inflated by prosperity; and instead of giving the glory to God because of it, assumed a lordship over things sacred, and so incurred the severe chastisement which confined him for life.... This is a passage of great ecclesiastical importance, and is often appealed to in the controversy regarding the distinct functions of the Church and State. The stout resistance of the priests was highly honourable to them:—and we trust that it was *their* spirit—a spirit of zeal for the

defence of their own hallowed territory, and not of domination, or a desire to invade the territory of others—which actuated the ministers of the Free Church at the time of the Disruption.... Uzziah's was a long reign, and so long as he was himself in public life, a very brilliant one. ... There are three suppositions in regard to what Isaiah wrote of him—either that he wrote it in the books of Kings, or among his own prophecies, as in Isaiah vi. 1, and it may be ch. xiv. 29; but these notices are so very brief that it seems more reasonable to conjecture a distinct work which has now perished. He was buried in the outfield of the royal burial-place.

2 Chronicles xxvii.—It would appear from Jotham's youth when he ascended the throne, that his vice-royalty must have been proportionally short, and so as to warrant the inference that Uzziah's leprosy might have come upon him at a late period of his reign. The circumstance of his not entering the temple of the Lord might either be a deduction from his general righteousness, as arguing a defect on his part in regard to the worship and observances of the temple; or it may have been an exception to his imitation of his father, in that he religiously avoided such an inroad as Uzziah had been guilty of. As usual, we have more here of Jotham, too, than formerly—as in the cities, and forest castles which he built—the latter, probably, for thé protection of his shepherds and husbandmen. We have also an account of his successful wars with the Ammonites, and above all, of the connexion between his might and his piety in verse 6. There is so little said in the Kings of his wars or ways, that we may be sure the book here referred to gave a far more

copious description of these than we have in the canonical Scriptures.

2 Chronicles xxviii. 1-15.—It is quite in the usual character of this history, that whereas in Kings the invasion of the Syrians and Israelites is stated simply as their act of coming up to Jerusalem to war—we are here told that "the Lord his God delivered Ahaz into the hand of the king of Syria," and that "he was also delivered into the hand of the king of Israel." The extent of what he suffered from the Israelites is also particularly told; and that is a most interesting, as well as peculiar information, which we have of the captives and of the spoil, brought —not into Samaria, but towards Samaria. The arrest laid upon them by a prophet of the Lord is here recorded; and it is quite in keeping with other of God's dealings towards others whom he employed as instruments for the chastisement of his people, but who, acting in their own spirit, and not as servants of his, do in their turn incur his displeasure. They slew their brethren in a rage, or in that "wrath of man which worketh not the righteousness of God." They overdid the work of vengeance; but it is well that there was still such a remainder of godliness amongst them as led the princes to give way before the warning and injunction of the prophet; and it gave rise to a result which is quite beautiful. The remonstrance of the prophet issued in a like remonstrance on the part of the chiefs towards the armed men, who in their turn were prevailed upon to do what was right, and the consequent reaction toward the captives is full of beauty and tenderness. Both captives and spoil seem to have been brought near to Samaria—the "hither" of verse 13. The

men "expressed by name" of verse 15, are the men before named in verse 12—the foresaid men who clothed the captives with the spoil that had been taken from them, and headed their convoy back to Jericho, and then returned to Samaria.

16-27.—Perhaps the occasion here related—of Ahaz sending for the help of Tiglath-pilneser, is distinct from the one recorded in Kings; at least there are different enemies stated here who invaded him—the Edomites and Philistines. Observe how, in the usual style of this book, it is said that "the Lord brought Judah low," and that it was because of Ahaz's sore transgression that Judah was made naked. He is here called "king of Israel," on the principle of a part for the whole, agreeably with 2 Chron. xii. 6; and Micah i. 14. The enormity of his doings, as against God, is still more insisted on, with the setting off clause—"this is *that* king Ahaz," or, such and "so wicked" was king Ahaz. The king of Assyria did help him against the Syrians and Israelites; and if not against the Edomites and Philistines, this last may have been on a second and subsequent occasion. His sacrificing unto the gods of Damascus which smote him, may signify his doing this to appease them—because he thought that they had smote him; or it may be that he was punished by the true God for his idolatrous homage to the gods of Damascus.... There seem to have been at least three gradations of honour in the burial of kings: first, that the funeral should be within the enclosure of the proper burying-ground—second, in the outfield of this said place, as in ch. xxvi. 23—and, lastly, in Jerusalem. On comparing, however, the cases in both books, there is some difficulty that hangs over the subject.

2 CHRONICLES XXIX. 1-11.—Hezekiah's mother, Abijah, is called Abi in Kings. The narrative of his reign is not expanded in the Chronicles, but so varied as to afford some important novelties. In particular, we read here of what he did for the repair of the temple, the doors of which had fallen into decay, nay, perhaps may have been injured or broken in the days of wicked Ahaz—during whose reign it seems that no attention was paid to the keeping of it—so that it had to be cleaned out. He also gave orders for the restoration of the temple service, which had been discontinued during the last reign; and assembling the ecclesiastical men, depicted in their hearing the woful consequences of their apostasy from the worship of the true God—the slaughter and the captivity and the contempt which had been judicially laid upon them. Hezekiah's address upon this occasion speaks the breathings of a truly religious spirit, and a feeling recognition of that God whom they had forsaken, and with whom he now proposed to enter into covenant. All this began in the very first year of his reign, and first month of that year. As a king he sought the Lord early—turned him at once to that godliness which is profitable unto all things, to that righteousness which exalteth a nation.

12-24.—We now read of the execution of Hezekiah's orders. The sanctifying here spoken of in verse 17, is tantamount to the cleansing in verse 18—for nothing more had yet been done. The sacrificing took place after that the priests told in verse 19 how they had sanctified the vessels—as if, in preparation to the expiatory rite, they were not only cleansed, but set before the altar of the Lord. They were the vessels, let it be observed, which Ahaz had profaned, by casting them away, or by abstract-

ing them from the service of the temple, and turning them to profane uses. But an atonement had to be made ere this sanctifying was perfected. We are saved not by water only, but by water and blood. And this atonement had respect not to persons only, but to things. A sin-offering was made not for Judah only, but for the sanctuary; and ere the vessels could be consecrated to their original and holy use, there behoved to be an expiation as well as a washing.

25-36.—The whole story of this temple reform is peculiar to Chronicles; and it marks the diligent observance of those institutions which had been established by the worthies of old, but had now fallen into desuetude.... One likes the references here made to such orders of procedure as had been laid down by David and Gad and Nathan. And not only was the right ceremonial kept, but right affections from the heart seem to have gone along with it —they made melody with their hearts unto the Lord—they sang praises with gladness. In verse 30 we learn that at least some psalms were composed by Asaph, who is denominated a seer.... The burnt-offerings were wholly consumed—were wholly given up unto the Lord, and no part reserved for their own eating, which argued therefore a freer disposition on the part of the offerers. The greater zeal and uprightness of the Levites than of the priests, is analogous to what often occurs in later ages of the Church, when there is a greater evangelism among the subordinates, and moderation among the higher clergy. The gladness and rejoicing of these services hold out to us the lesson of a cheerful christianity. The common joy of the king and people on an occasion which approved itself to all their consciences and higher feelings, is

exemplified oftener than once in the brighter periods of the Jewish history, and decisively points out to us what the sure road is to a harmonization of the various orders in society.

2 CHRONICLES XXX. 1-14.—This whole narrative of Hezekiah's passover we have only in the Chronicles; and it forms a bright passage in the history of the nation. It argues a greater supposed number of faithful adherents to the true worship in Ephraim and Manasseh that he should have sent notice of it to these two tribes.... The second month of the year was not the regular time for the keeping of the passover, which was the first month; but this is accounted for by their having employed the first month in the cleansing of the temple and its necessary preparation. Though Ephraim and Manasseh are singled out, in the first instance, for intimations of the coming passover, there was a proclamation issued forth to all Israel; and a most earnestly religious message sent over the whole land. The scorn and mockery wherewith it was generally received, identifies in a very strong manner the human nature of that age with the human nature of the present day—when men who have long lapsed into ungodliness, or rather who never breathed in any other element, pour out their ridicule on all the admonitions and very language of sincere piety. Some, however, even of Israel, responded aright to the invitation—while Judah seemed to be unanimous—and this not from the natural influence and authority of their own king alone—for it is said that it was the hand of God which gave them "one heart" on the side of the commandment. The first thing they did after they assembled in a great congregation, was to clear away

the idolatrous altars that were in Jerusalem, and cast them as rubbish into the brook Kidron, where the Levites had before cast in the offscouring from their purification of the temple.

15-27.—The shame of the ecclesiastics is highly natural and characteristic. They were outdone and dragged forward by the people, just as are at times the lukewarm clergy of the present day. They were forced reluctantly into services which they had long discontinued, and which in heart and real liking they were not yet prepared for. The thing was done suddenly, and there were many irregularities—but done as it was with honesty and a perfect good will, we doubt not that Hezekiah's prayer for pardon was accepted and fulfilled—even that every one who had prepared his heart aright should be forgiven, though in the preparations and prescriptions of the outward ritual he should happen to be defective.... The Lord's hearkening and healing, is a truly endearing representation of "the good Lord" to whom the good king addressed himself. The joint and mutual gladness of the king and people and Levites, is also a most interesting feature in the narrative; and so is the encouragement which the king gave to the ecclesiastics in their good work of instructing the people. The joy was greatly heightened by the play and exercise of a generous feeling on the part both of the monarch and of the rulers, who came forth with large contributions to provide for the spontaneous lengthening out of the occasion. This jubilee on earth reached "even unto heaven;" and O that a similar spirit were diffused over our land, so as to meet and satisfy the highest aspirations both of piety and patriotism!—My God, pour forth thine own Spirit on the princes and the great amongst

us; and let His influences be spread abroad among the families, so as to reach the poorest in the land. Then, indeed, will peace and righteousness be both of them realized in the midst of our British commonwealth.

2 Chronicles xxxi. 1-10.—This chapter, too, forms a great historical addition to the life and doings of Hezekiah. The breaking down of the images in Ephraim and Manasseh may have been effected in those places or towns which happened in the chance of war to be under Judah at the time—or else it may have been done without the consent of the proper authorities. Or did Hoshea, who is spoken of as less abandoned than the other kings of Israel, connive at this proceeding on the part of Hezekiah? Let us here remark his intromission with the services of the temple; and most legitimate it was, for it extended only to seeing that the ecclesiastics performed their duty; but that duty behoved to be according "as it was written in the law of the Lord." And his enforcements upon the laity for their payment of the tithes and first-fruits—these, too, were most legitimate, and formed a right intromission of the civil with the ecclesiastical, and clearly belong to the part which secular rulers might have *circa sacra*, though not *in sacris*. The dwellers in cities also brought tithes of such things as they had, as oxen and sheep, fed on the suburban property which belonged to them, though not as the others, any of the produce of culture. They had besides other devoted things which could be laid together in heaps; and which altogether formed an accumulation greater than the priests could consume—a matter of great thankfulness to Hezekiah, both as indicating the abundance that there was among the people, and,

what was still more precious, their faithfulness and good will.... The commandment went abroad or beyond Jerusalem to the children of Israel in the country places—meaning by this, no doubt, those of Judah and Benjamin, called Israelites generically, in verse 5; while the distinction made in verse 6 of the children of Israel and Judah in cities, proves that many of the twelve tribes had repaired to Judea.

11-21.—They had to provide room for the accommodation of their ecclesiastical goods, among which the distinction should be observed of freewill-offerings and tithes, which were obligatory by law, and dedicated things which were also obligatory, but on the strength of a previous vow on the part of him who rendered them. They were all, it should be remarked, brought in faithfully—the spirit of the monarch descending to the people, and spreading abroad among them. There was also made a distinction among the officers who were appointed to the charge of these goods, even as there was a distinction among the goods themselves: thus Kore was overseer of the freewill-offerings—but perhaps only for the distribution of these and of the things sacrificed in their respective shares to the priests and others. He had also people under him in the country, who might give their portions to the priests, who, though they took their turns in the service of the temple, yet resided out of Jerusalem.... "Besides" here, is not "except," or "exclusively," but "over and above," or "inclusively," and thus signifies that shares were given, not to the priests alone, but also to their male children from three years old and upwards, who were brought thus early to the temple, in preparation, it is likely, for their future official duties. This distribution included the

Levites also—for they, too, were consecrated men. Perhaps at twenty they got a larger portion for themselves individually, while the aggregate portion was large enough to provide for their wives and families. There were men in every city where the priests had occupation, whether in the town or its suburbs, whose business it was to carry this distribution into effect. It was an arrangement, in fact, which required an organization for the whole of Judah; and the pains which Hezekiah took for the accomplishment of this are recorded only here, and not elsewhere. A eulogy of him is subjoined in consequence—as having not only "wrought that which was good, and right, and truth," but as having wrought it before the Lord his God. Without this last qualification there might have been integrity, but his leading characteristic was piety; and so in what he did unto the Lord in the service of His house, in His law, and His commandment, he sought God's will and glory, and did so with all his heart, and prospered accordingly.

January, 1845.

2 Chronicles xxxii. 1-8.—This narrative of Hezekiah's reign, after having given much that was additional and new respecting it, now presents us with a very brief account of the Assyrian invasion, which, brief though it be, is still in some respects peculiar.... There is no account here of his attempting to buy off with the treasures of the temple the hostility of Sennacherib; but a fuller account of his defensive preparations; of his shutting up the water from his enemies; of his strengthening the fortifications; and, above all, of his pious and encouraging addresses to the people, based on the duty of confidence in God. It is well to remark, that he spoke to them with effect, for they

"rested themselves upon his words".... This invasion took place after the establishment of the great reformations which had been accomplished by Hezekiah; and during the progress of which the people must have caught much of their monarch's spirit, and so have been all the more prepared to share in his sentiments.

9-23.—There is a very abridged account given here of the parley which the servants of Sennacherib held with the people on the wall. They are not named as in Kings, and but a few generalities of their conversation noted. Neither is there mention made of the request that they should speak in Syrian and not in Hebrew. Still there is much of the pith of the narrative inserted in this brief and compendious description of what took place; and the blasphemous character of the Assyrian defiance is distinctly fastened upon. The fact that Hezekiah did pray is stated, but the prayer itself is not given. Neither is the message of Hezekiah to Isaiah, nor yet the reply by the latter, mentioned here, but we have the prayer and cry of Isaiah noted here, while they are his predictions only which are noted there. There seems, in short, to have been no copying of the one book into the other in this instance.... The signal destruction both of Sennacherib and his army, is narrated in both books, each in its own way—but it is in Chronicles, where characteristically and devoutly, the story is ended by its being represented as the doing of the Lord, who both saved Hezekiah and his people from Sennacherib, and "guided them on every side." The effect was, that Hezekiah rose to great estimation in the sight of the people of other lands, who gave the homage of their offering both to the temple and to the king.

24-33.—The messages of Isaiah to the king, both on the occasion of his sickness, and after the departure of the ambassadors from Babylon, are not here adverted to; and even the sign given for his recovery, and his pride of heart when the ambassadors came to him, are but slightly and generally noticed—though its being a trial of him from the Lord, as well as an offence against Him, are distinctly told.... We also read here of Hezekiah having submitted and humbled himself, and that in consequence the judgments against Judah were deferred till after his death. At the close of the narrative respecting him, there is a much fuller account than in Kings of his prosperity and greatness; and it is not omitted, that it was "God who gave him very much substance." The distinction of his burial-place, and the honour put upon him at his death, are also recorded.... The upper water-course of verse 30, is doubtless the matter referred to in 2 Kings xx. 20. His story is told thrice in Scripture—in two historical books, and in the prophetical book here called the vision of Isaiah. He was a great and good king.

2 CHRONICLES XXXIII. 1-13.—It is interesting to observe where it is that the history in the Chronicles seems almost to be transcribed from that in the Kings, and where it deals forth original matter of its own. There is much of what is original in its account of Hezekiah—whereas the first ten verses of this chapter regarding Manasseh, are nearly in words, and wholly in substance, as if taken from the counterpart passage in the other narrative. Still there is here one most notable peculiarity—the captivity of Manasseh, and what is greatly more instructive, his repentance—a repentance that was accepted by the God whom

he had offended so grievously.... The judgments that were consequent upon his great transgression, do not seem to have come upon himself individually. On the contrary, his prayer was heard, and he was brought again to Jerusalem, and replaced upon his throne. May we not hope that as he is now said to know the Lord his God, this was something more than a γνωσις, even an επιγνωσις, and that he knew the Lord savingly—so as to hold forth a pattern in him the chief of sinners—for an encouragement to all who should afterwards believe. The mysterious part of the whole is, that God should have thus turned away from the fierceness of his wrath against Manasseh, but not against Judah, whom Manasseh had caused to sin, verse 9; or, as in 2 Kings xxiii. 26, his anger was kindled and kept up against it, because of the provocations of Manasseh, and yet was no longer kept up against Manasseh himself.... We humbly acquiesce in the jurisprudence that we cannot comprehend; and feel it most instructive to observe the harmony between such specific instances and the general character of a jurisprudence that includes the whole species, and whereby all of us inherit guilt and misery through the sin of our progenitor in Eden.

14-25.—We now read not only of his repentance but of his reformation. After his return from Babylon, besides strengthening the country by fortifications, he removed its idolatries, and set up the worship of the true God—though the high places were still kept up; and thus he attained not to the righteousness of David, but, at least, to that of the second-rate good kings that were before him.... It is very clear that the book of the kings of Israel, here referred to, is not the canonical book—for,

though the words of warning and remonstrance are given there, nothing is said of his prayer, or of God being entreated of him, or of his humiliation. The sayings of the seers must have been committed to writings which have now perished.... He was " buried in his own house," or, as we learn from the other narrative, in the garden belonging to it.

There is no expansion, but the contrary, of Amon's history in this book. When taken in connexion with the repentance of the father, it goes, however, to aggravate the wickedness of the son, that he should have reversed the character of the later part of the preceding reign—nay, that he sacrificed unto the very carved images which his father had made; and which, instead of being merely cast out or removed, ought to have been destroyed.

2 CHRONICLES XXXIV. 1-7.—At the outset of this narrative respecting Josiah, there is a close resemblance to that in Kings; but we have here an account of his doings up to the eighteenth year of his reign, which is there passed over. More particularly we are told, that in the eighth year of his reign, or when he was fifteen years old, he began to be religiously in earnest, and to seek after the true God, here named " the God of David his father," other than the gods whom so many of his predecessors had worshipped. And in the twelfth year of his reign, or when nineteen years old, he carried his religion into public effect, by destroying and defiling the whole apparatus of the idolatry of his nation. It was in the direct exercise of the authority which rightfully belonged to him, that he cleansed Judah and Jerusalem; but he carried his reformations farther than this—to the cities of Ephraim,

Manasseh, and Naphtali. Perhaps these territories lay more open to him after the captivity of Israel.... We can understand how he should have found access to Simeon... It is even said of him, that he "cut down the idols throughout all the land of Israel."

8-17.—The story then proceeds in coalescence with that in Kings, about his sending Shaphan to the temple, which he had previously purged, and now proceeded to repair. ...There was money collected in the provinces, and it is said, generally, "of all the remnant of Israel"—the remnant after the captivity. It would appear that former kings of Judah had destroyed, not the temple, but houses it is said—out-houses and appendages it is likely to the temple....There is a more full and particular account given here of these rebuildings and repairings—as the names of the overseers, and the part which the Levites had in the business. The Levites, particularly those who had the charge of the musical service of the temple, were set to superintend—perhaps, because they had longer intervals of official duty than the others; and if they served in courses, could take it in turn, so as to keep up a constant charge. It is obvious that the Levites, as being the most leisurely and literary of all the tribes, could furnish a greater number of overseers, and officers, and scribes, and guardians, in the capacity of porters.... There is also a more circumstantial account given here of the finding of the book of the Law.

18-33.—This passage is almost a paraphrastic copy of its counterpart in Kings. But on comparing the two histories, one is somewhat at a loss for the chronology of that reformation which consisted in the removal and destruction of the idolatries that had prevailed. Here it

is made to begin in the eighth year of Josiah's reign, and it seems to have been wellnigh consummated before he sent Shaphan to the temple. But in Kings it is described as if after the eighteenth year of his reign, and after the solemn covenant which he made with God in the sight of his people.... It is true that in Chronicles also, (verse 33,) we read of a further reformation after this event, so that what he began in the eighth, may not have been completed till the eighteenth year of his reign; or rather it never was in effect completed, for Josiah seems all along to have had a contest with the resistance of the people, so that his attempted reformations were ever doing yet never done. (Jeremiah iii. 6. and xxv. 3-7.) The monarch was more intent than his people on the service of the true God.

2 Chronicles xxxv. 1-19.—The history of Josiah's passover, stated briefly in three verses of the Kings, is given at much greater length here. He gave words of encouragement and direction to the ecclesiastical men....When he told the Levites that the ark should not be a burden upon their shoulders, he seems to have meant that it must not be carried about as of old, and perhaps as it may have been recently in these days of relaxation and rebellion, but have its fixed abode in the sanctuary.... Mark here the deference paid to the written instructions of David and Solomon, as also the word of the Lord by Moses. Mark also the liberality both of the king and princes in the distribution of lambs and kids for the passover offerings, and of larger cattle, I presume, for their maintenance, though for offerings also. They gave willingly. They reserved so much for burnt-offerings, and gave the

bulk of what they had contributed to the people for their offerings. The priests were so occupied in the business of the people's offerings that the Levites had to prepare both for them and for themselves. They, on the same ground, had also to prepare for the porters. It is here reiterated that there was no such passover since the days of Samuel, or, as it is expressed in Kings, since the days of the Judges.

20-27.—The brief notice in Kings regarding the close of Josiah's life, is expanded here into some particulars —as that Necho or Pharaoh-Necho's expedition was directed against the king here named Carchemish; and Necho's remonstrance to Josiah, as also his allegation of his having received a commission from God to fight with the house or monarchy of Assyria; and what is still more remarkable, the seeming admission of Scripture that the words of Necho were from the mouth of God. This message he might have received by a vision, or from Jeremiah, or one of the prophets, or, some think, from his own soothsayers, who might occasionally be permitted by the true God to prophesy aright. At all events, the king of Egypt's seems to have been no pretence or fiction, as was that of Sennacherib. (2 Kings xviii. 25.)... Pharaoh seems to have been a generical name for the kings of Egypt. Necho, in this instance, being the specific or surname... Between the Kings and the Chronicles it seems uncertain whether Josiah died at Jerusalem, or before he reached it. The mourning for Josiah is here emphatically told, though unnoticed in Kings. One can understand that there might have been a real as well as an official mourning for Josiah, though not proceeding from that godly sorrow which is unto salvation. It was otherwise with Jeremiah,

whose pathos was not only eloquent, but heartfelt, and after a godly sort. He seems to have composed a national elegy, which was set to music, and the performance of which was then of stated celebration among the Jews. It has now perished, for his Lamentations for the death of Josiah differ from his Lamentations for the destruction of Jerusalem. His goodness, however, is indelibly recorded in our Canonical Scriptures. (verse 26.)

2 CHRONICLES XXXVI. 1-10.—The closing history of the remaining kings of Judah is very much abridged in the Chronicles. A part of the former history of Jehoahaz is all that is given. By his being "put down," we are to understand his deposition, or, as critics incline to translate it—removal. There are also omissions in the history of his brother Jehoiakim, though the transference of the sacred vessels from the temple in Jerusalem to the idolatrous temple in Babylon, so early as in this reign, may be held as a novelty.... The discrepancy between the Kings and Chronicles in regard to the reign of Jehoiachin have called forth various ingenuities of explanation—the one putting it at eight and the other at eighteen years. It is remarkable that there is another discrepancy, in that ten days are here added to the eight years; and Lev xxv. 29, has been referred to as warranting the translation of these days into years, which would make out the eighteen. We read in no other instance of the odd days being given when the length of the kings' reigns is stated, but only of years, or years and months. In nothing are mistakes more likely to occur than in the transcription of numerals.

11-23.—The history of Zedekiah is also greatly short-

ened, though it is only here that we are told of his not humbling himself before Jeremiah the prophet, who must have remonstrated with and warned him from the mouth of God. We are further and additionally told here of Nebuchadnezzar having caused Zedekiah to swear by God—probably, that he would maintain his allegiance to himself. ... The closing history in the Chronicles treats its events more as Divine judgments—and this is the general character of the book—whereas in Kings they are more related as simple occurrences. Accordingly, the transgressions of the priests are here more dilated on — as also the messages of God, and their contempt of these messages; and, lastly, as the consequence of all, the invasion of the Chaldees, brought on, it is expressly said, by the God whose words had been despised. There is a profound and unfathomable theology involved in the whole procedure—first, of God's compassion; and, secondly, of the irremediable calamity that at length came upon the nation. Could not God, it might be said, have sent the grace that would have closed with His compassionate overtures?—instead of which there was no remedy, (verse 16,)—in striking counterpart to the destruction of Jerusalem, for the arresting of which the blessed Saviour would have gathered them under His protection—He would, but they would not; and so the day of peace was terminated—the things of peace were for ever hid from their eyes.... It is a most important reference that is here made to the prophecy of Jeremiah.... The chronological reference here made to the kingdom of Persia is also very important; and the points at which sacred and profane history touch each other, are of the utmost moment both to the students of prophecy and of history.

EZRA.

Ezra i.—This book begins as the last ends. It is most interesting to observe the workings of God's Spirit on a heathen prince, and his recognition of the true God.... By this decree the Jews were granted liberty to go to Jerusalem, and to obtain subscriptions, both from their fellow-Jews who remained, and, it is likely, from the people also, of the land, over and above any freewill-offering which these contributors may have given for the building of the temple. They who availed themselves of the permission to return, would, if poor, require money for their travelling expenses, and for their settlement in Judea. It was God who put into them who returned the spirit so to do.... The last clause of verse 6 seems to be explained by the last of verse 4. What was given for the use of the travellers was given willingly, and this over and above the offering for the temple, which, as being of freewill, was also offered willingly. Compare verse 7 here with 2 Chron. xxxvi. 7.

Ezra ii. 1.—We found the genealogies in the Chronicles very unsatisfactory, though, no doubt, they accomplished their purpose at the time; and the critical explorers of Scripture may have discovered, and may even yet discover much in them that might serve to multiply these coincidences, which furnish so strong an evidence for the general honesty of the narrative. We should imagine that by the time of their return from the Captivity, the memorials of the various descents in the tribes and families must have become very imperfect; and many names are here introduced which appear but once in Scripture,

and which we therefore cannot connect with any other parts or passages in the history. But they may have been all recognised at the time; and the descendants of those who bear such names would have the benefit and the justice of a place in the registrations which we are here presented with. They are called the children of the province, from Judea being now a province in reference to Babylon; and they returned every man unto his place —that is, each to the possession which he had before the Captivity; or if there were any of other tribes, then to the places which were assigned to them.

2.—I conceive that Zerubbabel must be the same with Sheshbazzar of ch. i. 8—though some think the latter to be a Babylonian, and termed prince of Judah, as being the king's presiding officer over the business of this re-migration....Poole says that the Nehemiah of this verse is the same with the author of the canonical book under this name, though it does not well accord with the chronologies of some. At all events, if he be the same, he must have returned from Jerusalem to Babylon, and then come back again upon the posterior mission which he has himself recorded. There is something, however, in the chronology, which I have no time to investigate, but which, till explained, makes me doubtful as to the possibility of its being indeed the author of the next Scriptural book who is here intended....It is conjectured that the Mordecai here named was the uncle of Esther, and that he also must have returned to Babylon, and performed the part which is ascribed to him there. Seraiah is named Azariah in Nehemiah vii. 7....I hold it a weighty matter that this book should have been written in Chaldaic, in certain parts of it—a circumstance in keeping

with, and therefore confirmatory of the direct history—a harmony between the internal and external, out of which an impressive evidence is made to emerge.

3-20.—Here follows an enumeration—it is said, of the people of Israel—which is not uncommon in Scripture, though they be chiefly the people of Judah who are meant. They are first enumerated as the children, it would appear, of persons, and not of places, though one cannot avoid the impression that some of these are names of places too—as Bethlehem.... There are discrepancies of various sorts between the lists of Nehemiah vii. and this of Ezra. Let me now only advert to the change of names and numbers, where at the same time the transmutation is not so great as that we should lose sight of the identity. In verse 6 the number is 2812, and in Nehemiah vii. 11, it is 2818. The children of Bani are said in Ezra to be 642, and in Nehemiah they are called the children of Binnui, and their number is said to be 648. It is a still greater change when the Jorah of verse 18 passes into Hariph of Nehemiah vii. 24, with the number, however, of 112, the same in both. The same of Gibbar, verse 20, changed into Gibeon of Nehemiah vii. 25.

21-35.—Down to verse 21 the enumerated names are chiefly of men; thence to verse 36 they are chiefly of places or cities. Yet we should not say this exclusively of either—else how comes the Elam of verse 31, called "the other Elam," not to be the same in kind with the Elam of verse 7. They must either be both persons or both places—though the remarkable thing is, that the number of children belonging to each should be the same—1254. Those who were born in any place, or who sprung from ancestors whose residence and property were there, might

well be termed the children of that place. But there is a change in some instances from children to men—as "the men of Anathoth," &c., and we should expect that these were attached to places and not to persons, as in the cases of Beth-el and Ai. Yet when called children, instead of men, they are attached to places too, as in the case of Jericho. One might identify a number of these towns, and perhaps of some of the heads of families, too, in other places of Scripture. When the towns are mentioned, it is perhaps in those instances where the heads of the families were lost.... When there are variations between the corresponding lists of Ezra and Nehemiah, they had perhaps be better noted after we have made our way to the latter book.

36-42.—We have here an enumeration of the families of priests, whose genealogies were probably better kept, both as being in themselves of greater consequence, and also as being in the hands of a more literary order. One wonders that they bear so large a proportion to the Levites—arguing, that they offered to return in much greater abundance than did the inferior ecclesiastics. It is to be expected that the names of priests should occur more frequently in other parts of Scripture than those of more ordinary persons: we read of Jedaiah, whose children are here mentioned, in 1 Chron. ix. 10; xxiv. 7; of Immer, 1 Chron. xxiv. 14; and of Harim in 1 Chron. xxiv. 8 Hodaviah, belonging to the Levites, is called Hodevah in Neh. vii. 43; but he seems also to be called Jehudah or Judah, in Ezra iii. 9—all variations, evidently, of the same radical name, which variations are very frequent in Hebrew.... The singers and porters must have been Levites, yet including these, the Levites altogether fell short of

350—whereas the priests considerably exceeded 4000. Are we to understand that none are reckoned here but the grown-up males? In verse 2 it is said to be an account of the *men* of the children of Israel.

43-58.—The Nethinims are the Gibeonites, who performed the meaner services of the temple. (1 Chron. ix. 2; and Ezra viii. 20.) It is not to be expected that the names here given of those who occupied such an underling station would occur in other places of Scripture, save in the corresponding list of Nehemiah.... The children of Solomon's servants were probably proselytes from among those aliens who had served him in the construction of the temple, and were afterwards kept by him for its service. They may have been of the same description with those mentioned in 1 Kings ix. 20, 21. It is not to be wondered at that so few of these should have offered to return from the Captivity. The priests returned in great numbers to their stations of consequence and emolument—but not the Nethinims, or the descendants from Solomon's slaves, to their state of bondage. There must, from the small number, on the whole, of those who actually went back, have been no such thing as any general willingness to re-settle in the land of their fathers.

59-70.—The names of these outlandish cities are sufficiently barbarous. It is possible that some of the Israelitish captivity may have been there; and their promptitude to return, even with the disadvantage of having no genealogies, or rights of possession, proves that not all, yet a goodly number, had not forgotten or lost attachment to their fatherland. There were others who alleged their priestly descent, but could not produce the evidence of it; and no wonder though many documents should have

perished with the ruin of Jerusalem. It may be, too, that the descendants of good Barzillai (2 Sam. xvii. 27) may have valued more their relationship to him than to the priesthood, and taken better care of the genteel than they did of the sacred genealogy. They were not admitted, therefore, to the priesthood; and by the sentence of the Tirshatha or governor, would not till they had received direct counsel to that effect from God, which it is not likely they did—as it is not understood that a priest with Urim and Thummim ever officiated in the second temple.... Some suppose the Tirshatha, whose title is not ascertained, was Nehemiah, which I cannot reconcile with aught that I know of the chronology of that period.... The sum here given of the congregation does not coincide with the items. I still presume that children were excluded. The discrepancy may arise from subsequent reinforcements, perhaps on the road, or by accessions from other tribes, of whom no numerical reckoning had been made.... When the chief of the fathers are said to have come to the house of the Lord, it must have been to the site of the old temple—the substructures of which are remaining, it is probable, to this day.

EZRA III.—As the seventh month was *drawing nigh*, the people came to Jerusalem, where some time would be required to prepare for the burnt-offerings which they began to offer so early as the first day of that month. They set up the altar, *though* the fear of enemies was upon them —or rather, as in our translation, *because* this fear was upon them. They betook themselves to God and His service, as their best security. They offered the offerings of all sorts, both the statutory and freewill-offerings, and

observed the prescribed feasts, having respect, with all attention and earnestness, no doubt, to the law of Moses, as in the service of praise they had respect to the ordinance of David.... It is interesting to note these connecting ligaments between the earlier and later points in the line of the Old Testament history.... The names in verse 9 are of Levites—Judah being the Hodaviah of ch. ii. 40.... The joy of the younger and sorrow of the older men are both most natural, and the latter particularly affecting, as called forth by the recollections of the first temple, and the contrast between it and any which they had the means of rearing on the foundation now laid.

Ezra iv. 1-16.—These adversaries were descendants of the men from Assyria, who replaced the captive Israelites—partly we have no doubt in the reign of Esar-haddon, who is named in 2 Kings xix. 37. On the rejection of their insidious proposal, they devised mischief and revenge against the Jews, and persevered in their hostile attempts during several reigns.... There is considerable discussion into which I shall not enter, about the identification of the kings here named with those in profane history. The names of those concerned in the letter to Artaxerxes are sufficiently outlandish; and let it here be remarked, that the language of the book passes from Hebrew to Chaldaic at verse 8, and a good way onward. The documents here inserted must have been originally framed in the latter language; and so this language is retained, not for them only, but for the conterminous narrative respecting them. Asnapper is thought by many to be either Sennacherib or Shalmaneser or Esar-haddon,

one or other of the kings who had to do with the colonization of desolated Palestine—though he may have been distinct from these and subordinate, though a very high dignitary. The representation which they sent up is certainly very plausible, and fitted to impose on the ignorance of parties so far above and so far away from the scene of these transactions.

17-24.—This letter produced its likely and natural impression. The place in the national records which had been pointed out, was consulted; and the jealousy, if not the fear of Artaxerxes, was awakened thereby.... In the reigns of David and Solomon, all the country to the west of the Euphrates, or beyond it, from Persia, had been tributary; and enough of Jewish history had been transmitted to make the power and frequent rebellion of the people quite manifest. And so an order of suspension was issued, which arrested the building of Jerusalem—an order which, so soon as it arrived, was carried into effect with great haste and eagerness by the people who had obtained it. Backed as they were by the royal authority, they had the power of putting a stop to it. Poole says that the work was made to cease for forty-one years—so that if Nehemiah came up at the first re-migration of the people, he must have been far advanced in life when he acted as governor of the Jews.

Ezra v.—Zechariah was the grandson of Iddo, (Zech. i. 1.) It would appear that though stopped from fortifying Jerusalem, they built private houses for themselves, and these in a high style too; (Hag. i. 4.) And further, perhaps they were not restrained by the order of Artaxerxes from building the temple—though even in this they

might have been greatly delayed by the hired counsellors spoken of in ch. iv. 5. These, in fact, and the prophets, were on the opposite sides of this question, as would appear from the remonstrance of Haggai. And it was well that the question was brought to an issue by the actual deed of building, which called forth a challenge on the part of their enemies, and landed in a fresh appeal to the court of Persia.... I should be disposed to regard verse 4 as anticipative of the communication by letter to Darius, resumed and repeated over again in verse 9. While this contest was going on at Jerusalem, God so strengthened His servants that they persevered in their work till the decision was given by Darius.... It was well that the attention of the king was directed to that place in the record which made favourably for the Jews. This seemed a different kind of return from that which was drawn forth by the former appeal that was made to the recorded annals of the nation.

EZRA VI. 1-12.—This is a very instructive passage—as exhibiting a scriptural sanction and example for an ecclesiastical support at the hand of civil magistrates—and this on the part of two heathen kings, Cyrus and Darius It is well that we have an extract of Cyrus' decree from the records of Persia; and also well that we should be presented with the still more stringently authoritative decree of Darius on the same subject. It seems to have been framed in a certain spirit of resentfulness towards the hostile reformers, and at all events strictly discharges and threatens them against all molestation of the Jews in their sacred undertaking. His recognition of the true God, and his value for the prayers of His worshippers,

are very interesting. His generous allowance for the expenses of the sanctuary, with the clause that its services should be according to the appointment of the priests, marks exceedingly well the respective parts which belong to the civil and ecclesiastical in matters of religion.

13-22.—The officials executed their commission speedily under the fear of the king, whatever dislike they may have felt themselves for the cause. And the building of the temple went on apace, with the leave of the king and by the encouragement of the prophets, whose very names exhibit a gratifying relation between Scripture and Scripture.... It would seem as if there had been two Artaxerxes —one who stopped the building, and another after Darius who patronized it. But this patronage must have been extended to the Jews after that the temple was finished, which took place in the sixth year of Darius. The joy at the dedication, and the observation of all that was prescribed by Moses, were most natural.... The offerings of each of the twelve tribes would lead one to suppose that the re-migration, though principally of Jews, had been re-inforced by the children of former captivities from Israel at large. The recognition of God throughout the whole transaction is most becoming. It was the Lord who made the people joyful; and it was He—who turneth the hearts of men whithersoever He will—it was He who turned the heart of the king of Assyria for the strengthening of the hands of the Jews. After this let us hear no more of the incompetency of a Church receiving aid from a civil government, whether for the erection of its churches, or the maintenance of its clergy.

EZRA VII. 1-10.—I should term the Artaxerxes introduced

here—Artaxerxes II. of Scripture. It is here that Ezra is first introduced, called the son, though a remoter descendant, of Seraiah the high-priest, who was killed by Nebuchadnezzar. (2 Kings xxv. 18-21). Josedech was the son of Seraiah, and Joshua, the son of Josedech, seems at this time to have been high-priest. Ezra, at all events, was of the family, and nearly allied to the high-priest. His personal qualifications were of a very high order—whether as literary, being a ready scribe in the law of Moses—or as moral and religious, being prepared in heart both to seek the law of the Lord and do it, and also to teach others the same. He, moreover, possessed great influence at court—for the king granted him all his request, but this under God, the King of kings, or because God had so disposed it. To this he also owed his safe and prosperous journey to Jerusalem. (verse 9.) ... This expression, "the hand of God," occurs frequently in Scripture—to denote the power and will of God in favour of the object for which that hand is lifted up.

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11-28.—Ezra's peculiar accomplishments are here described more closely and professionally, as being a scribe of God's law, and commandments, and statutes—in keeping with all that is asserted of him as the restorer, and authenticator, and final compiler of all the books in the Old Testament then extant.... In this friendly decree of Artaxerxes, we find both his own freewill-offerings and orders on the national treasury, as well as his authority, given for taking up voluntary contributions from the people at large. Beside this, he gave Ezra letters of credit on the provincial treasurers up to a given amount. What an

argumentum a fortiori in behalf of the legal, as well as voluntary provisions for a Church in professedly Christian kingdoms. With all this, what a careful separation of the civil from the ecclesiastical, in the part which he assigns to Ezra—concluding with the settlement of a full protection, and yet free of all illegitimate control.

Ezra, so far from repudiating all this civil patronage and aid, as the voluntaries do, blesses God for thus opening the heart of the king. He derived encouragement from it, and records what he did upon the strength of it. Yet the king and his privy council do not appear to have been of the true religion, though actuated by a certain reverence for the true God, and by a desire to avert his wrath from their country.

EZRA VIII. 1-14.—The use of the first person forms an internal evidence for this book being the work of Ezra. In the record of names here given, there are some priests. A few had not their families, as attendants, along with them; perhaps they had gone before, or were afterwards to follow. Let it be observed, that though altogether they made a goodly number, they came very far short of the first re-migration; and, doubtless, many of the Jews had formed attachments and connexions in Babylon, which led them to prefer remaining where they were. The last sons of Adonikam are here mentioned. It is probable that part of this family went before, and that the remainder now followed. We can imagine many successive journeyings not recorded, but taking place from time to time, as they were encouraged by reports from Jerusalem. Indeed, we have the children of Adonikam in the first list, (ch. ii. 13,) which makes it all the more probable

that those mentioned here constituted the remnant of his family. There are some other names the same in both lists.

15-23.—The river Ahava has not been identified.... It is a remarkable circumstance, that none of the Levites appeared at the first to Ezra, though so many of the priests did. This is in keeping with what took place at the first re-migration, when a great number of priests, but very few proportionally either of Levites or Nethinims, joined. But both of these were to a considerable extent prevailed upon when men of influence and wisdom were sent to persuade them—a good specimen this of the force of the aggressive principle. Still it was by the good hand of God who gave efficacy to their persuasions, and who turneth the hearts of men as He will, that they succeeded. And it is most interesting to observe, that by the proclamation of a fast, immediate recourse was had to God and not to man, for protection and safety on their way.... Ezra would not apply to the king for soldiers; and the cause of this was a most natural and right one. It was far better that he exercised faith and did honour to God, even in the sight of the world, on this occasion; and he was not disappointed, for God was "intreated of him."

24-36.—Ezra set apart for the custodiers of the treasure twelve chief priests, and it would appear as many Levites, for the two here named are such, verses 18 and 19. He committed holy things to those whose offices were holy. The value, when converted into English money, is stated to be upwards of half a million—a sufficient temptation to the robbers by whom the whole of that region was infested. The weight of the gold and silver was

taken when made over to the keepers, to be taken afterwards when delivered up by them on their arrival at Jerusalem. It was made up of freewill-offerings by several parties, among the rest, by all Israel then present—probably those who accompanied Ezra. Ezra's faith in God was not put to shame, for by His good hand they were protected from all who lay in wait for them. On their arrival, the weight of the precious metals was recorded.... One cannot but remark the frequent recurrence of the old priestly names, as Phinehas and Eleazar, in the descendants of Aaron. It is well to find the instant resort of these captives to the ritual services of their law. The journey was alike prosperous in its progress, and at its termination. The furtherance of their objects by the civil governors, was a matter worthy of being thankfully recorded, though the proximate cause of their readiness was the authority of the king.

Ezra ix.—This chapter is full of unction and piety—the outpouring of Ezra's righteous spirit, offended and grieved by the transgressions of his countrymen, who, after their return, soon made exhibition of their old characteristic insensibility to mercies and deliverances, however great or however recent. His distress was most natural; and more especially when he heard that their chief men were extensively implicated in the crime. He made an impressive demonstration of this, and, in particular, to those who trembled at God's word, and bethought them of the heinous delinquency into which so many had been seduced or carried away. The prayer is a very fine devotional effusion. The confession and rehearsal both of Israel's iniquity and punishment in times past, and of the

aggravated transgressions into which, in the face of so fresh a deliverance, they had just fallen, are expressed with great force and feeling.... In stating the boon which they had received at the hand of God, the "nail in the holy place" may signify the stability and sure fastening which they had gotten, so as to secure them their old services; and the wall is expressive of the protection which they now enjoyed. The gravamen of the present great offence is brought out with great effect; and altogether there is the earnestness of a just and strongly felt sense of what is owing to God, and of the flagrant violation thereof, in this fervent supplication.

EZRA x. 1-6.—There was a very large and strong sympathy with Ezra in those sentiments of grief and righteous disapproval so strongly manifested by him. And it did not terminate in feeling, but was carried forth into vigorous and decided practice. Not only did the people, but the influential men among them, make such proposals of reform as must have greatly encouraged Ezra. In the proposals, however, we see what may be termed perhaps the hardness of the old dispensation. Paul did not counsel thus; but there must have been an urgent expediency for the separation in those days. The hardest part of it lies in the putting away of the children. Yet a most corrupting influence might have been retained in the congregation, had they, too, not been put away—besides that, in general, when separations take place, the children go with the mother.... Ezra, on visiting Johanan, would accept no entertainment from him—a palpable way of expressing the grief which he felt, because of the great transgression into which his countrymen had fallen.

7-14.—There was, in the first instance, a convocation of all the people to Jerusalem, where, of course, there would be a mixture of the innocent and the guilty. It would have been a very operose matter to have separated the two, and done the business in the aggregate, and on the spot. It behoved to be gone through piecemeal—and nothing could have been better devised than the method that was actually taken. It would have been hard to have kept the innocent from their homes till the investigation and its consequent measures had been gone through; and, therefore, it was wise in every respect to have them all sent back to their respective places; and for the guilty alone, with the judges and elders of each place, to come up with the several cases which they had ascertained, that they might sit in judgment along with the chief men of the congregation, who were constituted as judges over the whole matter in Jerusalem. The local functionaries could not only bring up the certified cases, but, on their return, could see to every decreed separation being carried into effect.

15-25.—Jonathan and Jahaziah may have had some presidential or active duties connected with this examination assigned to them. They do not seem to have participated in the transgression, and were, therefore, all the more fit for the office.... Lightfoot contends for such an interpretation as makes out those who are named as having opposed the proceeding. However this be, Ezra took a chief part in this Commission of Inquiry, and they seem to have taken a full quarter of a year ere they finished the business. The transgression must have been gone into very extensively; due in part, I should imagine, to the small proportion of unmarried women who had

come up from Babylon. Neither was it confined to laymen, for the ecclesiastics had a full share in it. This corruption on the part of the priests was all the greater enormity in them, and must have had a baneful influence in the way of example. No wonder that for them, in particular, a sin-offering is said to have been offered, though possibly expiation was made either piecemeal or generally for the whole body of these offenders. There is a record kept of the delinquents, not only among the priests but among the Levites and office-bearers, and, lastly, among the people at large.

26-44.—I am not quite clear if all the defaulters are here mentioned, or only a part of them. If all, then the corruption did not spread so extensively as might have been anticipated from the previous Scripture—neither can one understand why it should have required so much time to adjust all the cases that are here specified. But had the practice been tolerated, it would most certainly soon have become quite current and general; and there was all the greater necessity for a prompt and decisive arrest being laid upon it, that the princes and rulers had been chiefs in this trespass. There were, in some instances, children from these proscribed marriages, which would indicate that the practice was coming in but gradually, and had not been gone into to a very great extent on the first return of the Jews from Babylon, seeing that but a few out of the whole had been so long married as to have children.... Ezra's is a name that stands deservedly high in Jewish history. He is not one of my chief Scriptural magnates, yet is deservedly of great and distinguished estimation, both on account of his professional learning, and his personal worth and piety.

NEHEMIAH.

NEHEMIAH I.—There is generally allowed to be an interval of ten or twelve years between the last reformation of Ezra and the journey of Nehemiah to Jerusalem—so that I presume this to be the same Artaxerxes who sent up Ezra. It would appear, then, that the friendship of the distant monarch formed no adequate protection to the Jews against their local enemies. They were not only in great affliction, but in great reproach, the evidence of which last appears afterwards, in the opposition which Nehemiah himself had to encounter.... This book is named by the Jews the Second Book of Ezra, yet Nehemiah must have been the author; and the external is strongly corroborated by the internal evidence, which lies in the habitual use of the first person. There is a deal of heart, and pious as well as patriotic feeling, manifested throughout the whole of this composition. The prayer is a truly cordial and devotional effusion of deepest earnestness. He adverts to the forsaking of His people by God, when they forsake Him ; and it is likely enough that their present distress was a consequence of their present conduct. Their way did not please God, and so God did not make their enemies to be at peace with them. On the contrary, Nehemiah enjoyed the favour of Artaxerxes, whose cupbearer he was.

NEHEMIAH II. 1-8.—We here read the answer to Nehemiah's prayer. God did grant him mercy in the sight of Artaxerxes, notwithstanding the annoyance which the king might have felt in the manner and countenance of

his cup-bearer. Nehemiah seems to have been afraid of this, but betook himself to prayer, which one might intermingle with the transitions and footsteps of ordinary business. He held converse with Heaven in the very midst of his doings upon earth; and the God of heaven, even He who turneth the hearts of kings whithersoever He will, did not fail him, but proved a very present help to him in trouble. A fine example of secret aspiration in every moment of perplexity or danger.... The circumstance of the queen sitting by Artaxerxes at the time when Nehemiah revealed the cause of his mental distress, has led to the conjecture of her being Esther. However this be, he got all that he requested, and, among others, materials for the house that he himself should occupy—a sort of official palace. Nehemiah seems to have been a man of tender piety; and he feelingly acknowledges, in the terms used also by Ezra, the good hand of God in the prosperity that was now awarded to him.

9-20.—Nehemiah, though a man of decided piety, was not, like Ezra, an ecclesiastic; and not having made the same profession of dependence on God, obtained what the other did not, a military escort to Judea. On his arrival he soon experienced the hostility of antagonists, and saw enough to account for the stops and hindrances to which the work at Jerusalem had been exposed.... Tobiah may have been originally a slave, but now promoted—no uncommon thing in the east. He and Sanballat were sadly grieved at the turn now taking in Jewish affairs.... Nehemiah's equestrian survey seems to have been arrested by the impassable state of the road, from rubbish or otherwise, so that instead of getting round Jerusalem, he had to turn back, and so entered at the opening where he had come

out. This reconnoitring excursion of his was altogether private; but it put him on vantage ground for his proposals that they should with all diligence recommence the work of building. He encouraged the chief men by telling them of God's great goodness.... One can understand the bitter derision of these wild and uncultivated adversaries, who were not aware of the royal sanction for Nehemiah's undertaking, and so charged him with rebellion. He seems not to have been explicit with these evil-disposed persons, but to have answered them with dignified reserve —at the same time testifying for the true God of heaven, and the God of the nation of Israel.

Nehemiah iii. 1-10.—It does not appear whether the priests put their own hands to the work, or put others to it at their charges—perhaps both. The latter way of it must be meant in some instances, as when single individuals or bodies are said to have done so much. It is said that the priests sanctified their portion of the work; and so some have conjectured that the sheep-gate which they built led to the temple, and formed an entry for such animals as were sacrificed. There were men who built in their corporate capacity, as the men of Jericho one portion, the Tekoites another, the men of Gibeon and Mizpah, a third—the last appearing to be under two chiefs, Melatiah and Jadon.... The nobles of Tekoa are indelibly stigmatized for not having joined in the work of the Lord—ashamed to labour, and refusing to pay for the labour of others. They would not bind or engage themselves in one way or other.... Of the individuals here named, it was a very natural undertaking that one should repair all that was over against his own dwelling-place.

11-21.—"The other piece" may be counterpart to what Hattush had repaired, or as much of the wall as he had done, beside the tower of the furnaces—ovens, perhaps, or places in which they burnt lime for the wall.... The daughters of Shallum took part in the work—by the employment, it is likely, of masons in pay. Then we have the record of some who, besides the reparation of the wall, set up gates, and provided them with all the requisite mountings. They had not lost the topography of the place by their absence from it, and so could speak of Siloah and the king's garden, and the city of David and his sepulchres.... The "house of the mighty" might be understood in various ways—a place, perhaps, of arms, or for military exercise, or for the guards of the city—a stronghold.... Nehemiah, the son of Azbuk, was not our author, he being the son of Hachaliah. I cannot but think, too, that the Nehemiah who went up with Zerubbabel (Ezra ii. 2) was a different person from the writer of this book. It is an interesting distinction conferred upon Baruch, who is here said to have repaired "earnestly." ... It is likely that Eliashib, the high-priest, would have a house of large dimensions—a sort of palace, so that to repair the wall from the door of his house to the end of it, might have been a goodly portion of it.

22-32.—Were the priests of verse 22 inhabitants of the plain, either along Jordan or about Jerusalem? (ch. xii. 28.) They may have had a country residence along with occasional temple duties.... The phrase "after him," denotes that the next mentioned began at that part of the wall where the other left off. Thus Binnui (verse 24) began from Azariah's house, he, Azariah, having repaired the wall at or by his house, even as Benjamin and Hashub did

before him. There was a part of the wall named Ophel. (2 Chronicles xxvii. 3; xxxiii. 14.) The Nethinims may have lived there as being near the water-gate, seeing that they were drawers of water, (Josh. ix. 21,) and probably did this service at Jerusalem for the temple. They are not expressly mentioned as having built at this place, but we think it is clearly implied, and more especially as it is said, that "after them" the Tekoites did their part. The Tekoites, as well as Meremoth, (verse 21,) are spoken of as having worked in two distinct places. From verse 28, &c., we may observe how frequent it was for these builders to select the proximity of their own dwellings for the part they put their hands to—thus blending the personal with the patriotic.... There is a place of the Nethinims, spoken of in verse 31, of which one cannot say whether it was the Ophel, where they are said to dwell, in verse 26. However this may be, we find that this chapter gives a description of the complete circuit, ending at the sheep-gate in verse 32, whence, at verse 1, they set out.

NEHEMIAM IV. 1-8.—It was while they were building the wall that Sanballat and Tobiah were enraged at the undertaking, and put the questions here given. Will they finish this work in a day? Will they get materials for it out of the rubbish, reduced to a residuum by former destructions? Tobiah has always struck me as a sort of graphic freebooter or guerilla-man; and there is something quite in keeping with this in the taunt which he threw out against the enterprise. Nehemiah felt very sore under the raillery, and committed his cause to God. His prayer is not a Christian one, if regarded purely as a prayer, and not rather as a prophecy from the lips of an

inspired man, who knew the hopelessness of their impenitency, and that they had sinned unto death. It mitigates the character of his imprecation, that he makes their guilt lie not in their provocation of himself, but in their provocation of God.... When the wall was about halfway up, their adversaries made a fresh outbreak of resentful feeling, and began to take active measures for stopping the further progress of the work.

9-23.—What a fine combination we have here of prayer and watchfulness—of men doing their uttermost, yet looking upwardly to God. O that this union of piety and wisdom were more realized on the side of the Free Church of Scotland—so that we might be as diligent as if men did all, as depending as if God did all.... The Jews were told by Nehemiah both to remember God and be in readiness to fight, so as to defend themselves. The whole were rightly marshalled and arranged under this able and well principled general. The rulers were said to be behind the general multitude, probably because interiorly situated; and at the same time near them, for the purpose of encouragement and direction, and to keep them at their work.... The expression must be figurative, of a working tool in one hand and a weapon in the other—but very significant of their readiness for whatever might happen. It was both a safety to the villagers, and a general relief to the body, that they should lodge at night in Jerusalem. The last verse informs us that Nehemiah personally shared in all the hardships and inconveniences of the common undertaking.

NEHEMIAH V.—This was a complaint of Jews against Jews. There was a dearth which so limited the produce,

that the small proprietors, and others, were under the necessity of fetching their subsistence from those who had it to sell—to pay for which, and taxes together, they had to mortgage their portions of land—nay, even to sell their children to bondage. They pled with great emphasis their common parentage with those who oppressed them. This last plea was taken up by Nehemiah, who indignantly sympathized with it, and urged it with good effect on the consciences of the creditors—charging them with the exaction of usury, every one from his brother. No wonder that with a theme so popular, he set a great assembly against them! There was great force and pertinency in the argument, that after he and others had done so much to redeem them from the heathen, were they after all to be brought into bondage by the Jews themselves? The nobles were dumb-struck under the force of reason, aided, no doubt, by the presence and outcries of a reclaiming multitude. He urged well the fear of God, and also the reproach of the heathen. It does not appear that he insisted on an entire remission of the debt. They were bidden restore the fixed property, but not to cancel what was owing, save the hundredth part, which may either have been the monthly interest, or 12 per cent.—or perhaps the levy of the tax-gatherers for support of the governor, which Nehemiah desired to be returned, as he had determined to live at his own charge, not at theirs. The promise of the nobles may have only been, that they should require no usury. Nehemiah here records his own disinterestedness, and commits himself to that God who will reward every man according to his works. He had much to exercise him both in the menaces from without, and the disturbances within. The result,

however, of the present outbreak, must have greatly strengthened him in the affections of the people.

NEHEMIAH VI.—The troubles of Nehemiah were not yet ended. We have here a record of more plots and machinations against him. But besides walking in his integrity, he was directed also to walk wisely. His answer is capable of various accommodations—"I am doing a great work, and why should I come down unto you?" He seems thoroughly aware of their deceitfulness, and so was enabled to withstand them; and it made them all the more formidable that they were in collusion and secret understanding with the Jews themselves, even with those who were in the class of prophets, against whom Nehemiah made his complaints unto God.... Shemaiah may have artfully shut himself up, under pretence of the fear wherewith he wanted to infect the mind of Nehemiah, that he might follow the example. But though he spoke as if in the form of a prophecy, Nehemiah was not imposed upon.

The completion of the undertaking disconcerted all his enemies. Tobiah seems to have been among the most powerful and persevering of his enemies. Both he and his son had married into Jewish families, and there were go-betweens, who kept practising on Nehemiah on the one hand, and set Tobiah against him on the other.

NEHEMIAH VII. 1-3.—These menacing appearances from without would make Nehemiah all the more careful to provide for the security of the city. Hanani is the same who came from Jerusalem to Babylon, and informed him of the desolate state of Jerusalem. (ch. i. 2.) I presume he was a brother of Nehemiah in the full and literal

sense of the term—which I should infer more readily from the verse here than from the former, where he is styled one of Nehemiah's brethren: that might signify but one of the same nation, in contradistinction to the people among whom they were captives. Hananiah, again, was ruler of the palace, mentioned in ch. ii. 8. It is at all times pleasing to be presented with the fine combination which he exemplified between the religious and the social, in that "he was a faithful man, and feared God above many." The principle of obedience to God is the only sure fountain of all human virtue.... The gates of Jerusalem, shut all night, were not to be opened till the approaches of an enemy could be perceived, and till all were awake and ready for the defence. It would seem as if even all day there were guards at the doors of the city—kept barred, and only opened for incomers when they presented themselves. It was a good arrangement to station each at his own house, when it was over against the wall—thus blending the personal and patriotic in the duties assigned to them.... It is not unlikely that the porters, singers, and Levites, of verse 1, as having been appointed for the temple, were exempted from the watches laid generally on the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

4-8.—Only some of the houses were builded, and many of them not completed. It is obvious, from the last verse, that the stances over against the wall were at least appropriated, and it may be, occupied with booths, or even houses far advanced.... Nehemiah asserts his own inspiration; and it is well to be told that he drew out the genealogy of the people under the direction of God. These catalogues form part and parcel of our Sacred Writings—serving a highly essential purpose at the time, and not

without use in our own latter days. The supernatural command to draw up a register, did not discharge him from the natural methods of finding out and ascertaining the materials for it; and, accordingly, he availed himself of a former register, drawn up on the first return from captivity many years back. The title of the genealogy here given makes up verse 6, and is the same with the title of the register from which it is taken in Ezra ii.; and, at least in the commencement, any variations are so slight as to warrant the impression of the one having been copied from the other. There do occur, however, from the outset, some variations in names yet easily accounted for, or fairly referable to errors of transcription.

9-27.—The discrepancies which obtain between this catalogue and the corresponding one in Ezra, land us in very considerable difficulties, and which I have not seen satisfactorily extricated. The circumstance of their agreements being so many, might lead to the conclusion that the one is but a copy of the other; and certainly, if they be indeed different, and taken at different times, though this might account for the actual variations, it never can account for the identity of their sums total—seeing how violent the improbability is that the errors on the one side should be accurately counterpoised by the errors on the other. It is this baffling circumstance which sets aside the explanations grounded on the theory of two different catalogues—such as the variations that must have taken place in the numbers of each family here specified, &c. May it not be accounted for thus?—that transcribers were more rapid and careless in their copying of the items than of the summations, seeing that these last possessed a greater and more general importance.

Poole, on the whole, inclines to the idea of the catalogues being different; and on the consideration that the sum here given is not of the later particulars, as stated in this chapter, but given from the account by Ezra, and for the purpose of its being seen at one view, how great the changes were which a certain period brought on the state of families—in altering the numbers of most, and bringing some to extinction altogether.

28-45.—We may here note some of the variations between Ezra and Nehemiah. In verse 7 Nehum, for Rehum in Ezra ii. 2. This might arise from the mistake of one Hebrew letter for another very like it. A new name —Nahamani—here, and not there. If this be a different catalogue, it may have proceeded from the accession of another family. In verse 10, 652 for 775—a specimen of several more of such variations. In verse 22 we have Hashum, of whom no mention is made by Ezra—the case of another sort of variation. In verse 24 Hariph for Jorah. Had he two names? We infer these two to be the same, not from their places in the respective catalogues, but from each having the same number. There are places at times instead of persons, even when they are called the children of the place, as in verse 25, &c.; and probably Elam, verse 34. The children of Magbish, given in Ezra, are not found here. There is no variation in the names or numbers of the priests, given both here and there in four families. We cannot affirm the same perfectly and fully of the three following classes of functionaries—the Levites, singers, and porters.

46-64.—The children of Solomon's servants are probably classed with the Nethinims, or descendants of the Gibeonites, because of their like condition as engaged in servile

offices. Solomon, at the building of his temple, employed bondmen, and gave them work which he did not lay on the children of Israel. Those spoken of in verse 57 are apparently descendants of theirs—I should think proselyted, too, to the Jewish religion, which I presume was universally the religion also of the Nethinims. True, the number of both is small, and they would form, it is to be supposed, but a humble fraction of the whole aggregate in Babylon—seeing it is not likely that very many would choose to resume the drudgeries which were laid upon them in the service of the temple.... Let it be remarked how similarly these enumerations of Ezra and Nehemiah are concluded, even as they began similarly. We have here, in particular, the difficulties of ascertaining the genealogies of certain priests; and the deliverance grounded thereupon recorded in about the very same words in both narratives .... I should have remarked how very creditable it was to those Nethinims and servants who did return to Jerusalem, notwithstanding the harder and humbler state that awaited them there. It evidenced all the greater strength of their religious principles and attachments.

March, 1845.

65-69.—There seems to me a great difficulty, though neither Henry, nor Poole, nor Kitto, take notice of it—whether the account here, and that in Ezra ii. 62, &c., relate to one and the same transaction. Nehemiah is expressly called the Tirshatha in ch. viii. 9 ; and could he have been the Tirshatha of the second chapter of Ezra? Kitto makes the difference, in point of chronology, between the occurrence of the passage before us and those which follow in the next chapter, to have been at least ninety

years. I can feign no adequate solution of this difficulty, and certainly have not yet found one. The Tirshatha is said to have been a Chaldean name of office, and is resolved into two words, one of which signifies wine, and the other to drink—and thus the cup-bearer received his denomination.... Nehemiah must have been mistaken in his hope of a priest to arise with Urim and Thummim, as there does not seem to have been any such during the second temple, till Jesus Christ filled it with his glory.... There is one variation in the sums from Ezra—viz., in regard to the number of singing men and singing women—200 there, 245 here. The latter, too, is the number of mules recorded, the same in both. If the former discrepancy, then, be from an error in the transcription, the copiers must have been more careless in regard to singing men and women than in regard to mules.

70-73.—The discrepancy between the accounts of the offerings here and in Ezra ii., makes in favour of those who hold it doubtful if they refer to one and the same occasion. There is no mention of the Tirshatha in Ezra. The single sum there stated exceeds all the items stated here —whence some would infer that Ezra takes in the contributions of the Persians also, whereas Nehemiah confines himself to those of the Jews. It is well that contributions were made, not by the chiefs of the fathers only, but by the rest of the people. It is a most unhealthy state of matters when the bulk and body of the public hold themselves exonerated because of the liberalities of the highly opulent few. The contrast has been made here between the conduct of those Jews, who, after their liberation from the Babylonish captivity, gave their offerings to the Church, and those Protestants, who, after their

liberation from the tyranny of Rome, instead of giving, plundered the Church of the property which belonged to it. It is a complaint which comes well from the English commentator, Matthew Poole; and we in Scotland have been treated in this way still more disgracefully.—Pour, O Lord, the spirit of liberality on the friends of our Free Church.

Nehemiah viii.—The chronological difficulties thicken upon us. The last half of the verse ending the last verse of the last chapter, and the first verse of this, are substantially the same with Ezra iii. 1; and they both head the narratives of the assemblages which are described respectively in these books. How can they be one and the same assemblage with the very different and widely distant dates which are given to Zerubbabel and Nehemiah, or even to Zerubbabel and Ezra? Verse 2 proves that there was a book of the law to bring; and that all the copies had not perished, so as to be miraculously restored by Ezra, who, nevertheless, may have been directed by inspiration to compile and to correct.... The occasion here narrated is a very noble one, and comprises matters of the greatest interest—the exposition of the word by a preacher in the way that is done now—the serious and sorrowful impression of the hearers—the gospel dissuasive against despondency, and persuasive unto that joy of the Lord which is strength.

It was before said that the people understood the law; and it is now said that the priests and Levites repaired to Ezra, for the purpose of being made to understand the law. They aimed at a deeper insight and a more thorough understanding, for which there is indefinite room

in the Bible. And they were more particularly desirous of learning what the public observances were, of which they had the official charge; and the first effect of this was a keeping of the feast of tabernacles.

NEHEMIAH IX. 1-6.—The transaction here recorded took place on the 24th day of the seventh month. (ch. viii. 2.) It is regarded as distinct from, and posterior by some years to the similar confession and engagement which are related in Ezra x.—a confession perhaps of fresh sins, and a renewal of their former engagement. It seems to have been a day of solemn repentance and humiliation, and the prayer here recorded is, indeed, a very full and impressive one.... It is worthy of remark, that though it was not competent for the Levites to sacrifice as did the priests, yet it fell within their office to preach and to pray, or to engage in such ministrations as formed the public service of the Jewish synagogues. They are only Levites who are spoken of as conducting the great national and religious service that is here celebrated—in which they seem first to have addressed the people, directing them to stand up and join in prayer, to which they instantly proceed, with such ascriptions of praise and sovereignty to God as mark a truly enlightened theology.

7-25.—But after they have done Him general obeisance as the God of Nature, they proceed to render that special homage which is due to Him as God of Israel; and so incorporate their national history with this utterance of exalted devotion.... The narrative, and the confessions, and the high acknowledgments of God, are given in a strain of sublimity and sacredness which has much of the loftiness of Isaiah—while the recognition of the great

events that took place in other days, so binds the past with the present, as to continue and sustain the history of this wonderful people along the pathway of successive generations.... The way in which the Sabbath is here singled out from among the other Divine institutions, might well evince the importance of its observation. The reference made to the Holy Spirit is also a most precious and noticeable peculiarity of this noble composition, throughout which the deliverances and grievous defections of the nation are so eloquently told.

26-38.—This prayer, which is mainly confessional, and therefore historical, has, in the foregoing passage, come downward to the settlement of the Israelites in the land of Canaan. And then follows the recital of their delinquencies, and of the chastisements from the hand of God, which they suffered because of them—presenting the alternations of a most chequered and various history.... There is full exposure here given of the provocations which a righteous and merciful God sustained at the hand of a perverse and stiffnecked people, who slew the messengers of heaven, and trampled their message under foot. Altogether, it forms a most severe and impartial record of the Jewish conduct, and such as a Jewish impostor, who studied to ingratiate himself with his nation, though at the expense of integrity and truth, never would have written. There are various high principles of theology in this replete and wealthy passage of Scripture. There is reference to the legal economy of "do this and live." There was the doctrine of God's Holy Spirit in an earlier part of the prayer; and there is here the doctrine of His inspiring agency, by which He illuminates the prophets, and makes them the organs for the conveyance of God's

mind and will to the children of men. And the great pervading lesson of all is the contrast between God's treatment and man's return for it to God—the unwearied forbearance and long-suffering on His part—the careless, and thankless, and daring defiance and rebellion upon ours.—O God, may we repent in time, and prevent the judgments which seem now to be impending over our own age, and our own nation.

NEHEMIAH X. 1-8.—It is mentioned at the close of the last chapter, that a covenant was written out to be subscribed by the Levites, priests, and princes; and here we are presented with the signatures—beginning first with Nehemiah the governor, who, as son of Hachaliah, is abundantly distinguished from the Nehemiah of ch. iii. 16, who was a subordinate ruler, and the son of Azbuk. There seems to be no satisfactory account of what look to be very great omissions in the catalogue of priests—those of Eliashib, the high-priest, and of Ezra, who was of the priesthood.... Seeing that the high name of Nehemiah takes precedency there of all the rest, one would have expected it to be followed up by the names of these two distinguished functionaries. Nehemiah not being a priest, stands alone and separated from all the other lay chiefs of the people, by the ecclesiastical names which come immediately after his. The connecting word "and," between him and Zidkijah, places him apart from the priests.

9-27.—After the priests' signatures follow those of the Levites. We recognise there most of the names who delivered the lengthened address and prayer of the preceding chapter; and who probably delivered them, not jointly, but each individually, to separate detachments of a

multitude far too numerous for being reached by the voice of one man. Should this have been the way, it would hold out the example of written prayers for public and devotional services. After the Levites' signatures, we have those of the chief men, many of whose names may be recognised in other catalogues; and it is probable that, by the guidance and comparison of these, adjustments might be effected between Ezra and Nehemiah. It would form an obvious use of these lists, which present us with mere nomenclature, and nothing else, if by their means different and distant parts of Scripture could be harmonized both with each other and with profane history.

28-39.—The people also gave in their accordance to the resolutions of the grandees—if not by their subscriptions, perhaps by their marks, or, at least, by their oaths, taken verbally. They were the more intelligent who did this, "every one having knowledge and understanding," which implies that the covenant was not entered into universally. Over and above the resolution to avoid mixed marriages, there was a resolution in regard to the observance of the Sabbath, and also in regard to the payment of their ecclesiastical dues.... The casting of lots for the wood-offering, was not that it might fall upon some to the exemption or escape of others, but that the course might be determined by which each might have his own time and turn for this needful contribution. It were well if the spirit of this passage could be more acted upon by Christians of the present day. There is a deal of stable morality in these Jewish observances, too apt, because Jewish, to be regarded as of temporary obligation. It is at all times a duty to look at principle and character, in the matter of marriage-alliances—at all times a solemn duty

to remember the Sabbath-day and keep it holy; and never more than at present, a duty to refrain from all sorts of avarice and injustice in the work of supporting the ordinances of religion.... The "tithe of the tithes" was ordained at the first. (Num. xviii. 26.) It was right, therefore, that inspectors should be appointed, who might look over the Levites when they were receiving their tithes, in order that the tenth of those due to the priest might be duly accounted for and paid. This was indispensable for the service of the house of God.

NEHEMIAH XI. 1-9.—It is observable that Jerusalem is here termed "the Holy City."... The assignation by lot of those who were to dwell there, implies that residence in that place was a sacrifice, and on the ground of one's natural or secular interest was not so eligible. This probably arose from the capabilities of the unoccupied soil, now appropriated and laid out, and where the fruits of industry were secured to the owner by the protection of a now friendly government—altogether making a location in the country more desirable, in respect of sufficiency and family comfort. And, accordingly, they who volunteered their station in Jerusalem, seem to have been applauded by the people as if for an act of disinterested patriotism. ... Israel (verse 3) is brought in here not very intelligibly. ... It does not appear that all the children of Judah are here enumerated, but only the descendants of Perez. The superior number of Benjamites is perhaps owing to Jerusalem having been at one time very much a Benjamite city.

10-19.—The priests, as might be expected, and was right, were very numerous in Jerusalem. They had "the

work of the house" to do; and the enumeration here given makes out more than a thousand of them. Ahasai, in verse 13, here called the son, was the grandson of Meshillemoth—for in the genealogy of 1 Chron. ix. 12, Meshullam is interposed between them. Zabdiel is said to be "the son of one of the great men." The last words might have been translated as a proper name, and then he would have been termed the son of Haggedolin.... The priests were occasionally warriors, and so the characteristic of being "mighty men of valour" might not be inappropriate. These words, however, might have been rendered into "men of great wealth."... The Levites were not nearly so numerous as the priests. It is not likely that there would be so many volunteer residents amongst them in Jerusalem. "The outward business of the house of God," whereof they had the charge, is a very pregnant and memorable expression. But they had other and higher employments than this: while the priests had specially to do with the offering, the Levites had to do with the public services of praise and prayer. The Christian ministers of the present day do not exercise higher functions than was competent for them, if we except the dispensation of the Sacraments.

20-36.—They are here called "the residue of Israel"—a generic name, comprehending all the sons of Jacob who had come back to Palestine, though these were chiefly of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin. The residue, who were in the provinces, each in his inheritance, had situations more eligible, in a state of peace and security, than a residence in Jerusalem. Many of these occupants, at a distance from Jerusalem, were officials, or priests and Levites; and the servile Nethinims, again, were stationed at Ophel,

close on the wall of Jerusalem. (ch. iii. 26.) Uzzi may have been overseer of all the Levites in Judea, though himself residing in Jerusalem. The singers, over and above their proper vocation, had spare time for the general superintendence of the temple, and seem to have had an extra allowance for this, probably from the king of Persia. The king appointed the sons of Asaph over things sacred, and Pethahiah over things civil, or which occurred between him and the people. It was well that a Jew, one of their own number, filled such an office—distinct from, but inferior to that of Nehemiah, who may be said to have occupied the place of viceroy. I confess that my own preference would have been for a residence in some of the villages, of which those in Judah are distinguished from those in Benjamin—the Levites being distributed among both. To these villages were annexed a circumambient domain—they were villages with their fields.... "The valley of craftsmen" must have been not a manufacturing town, but a manufacturing district, such as I have often seen in Yorkshire, Lancashire, and Gloucestershire.

NEHEMIAH XII. 1-9.—We should expect of this passage that some things confirmatory of its statements would be found in Ezra—particularly in Ezra ii., where the first verse gives the same sort of prefatory announcement that we have here, only that there the catalogue of names is more generical, whereas here it is confined to the priests and Levites who came up with Zerubbabel—that is, at the first return of the people from their captivity.... Surely the Jeremiah here recorded is not the prophet, nor is Ezra the scribe—else both must have been of an extraordinary age ere they died. Nevertheless, many are for

associating Ezra with both the returns—that is, under Cyrus and under Artaxerxes, though at the expense of ascribing to him a life of 130 years.... The catalogue given here is fuller than that of the priests and Levites in Ezra ii. 36, &c.; but we can recognise some of the same names in both—though, it should be recollected, that here we have the names of individual priests and Levites—there the names of heads of families.... To be "over the thanksgiving," is to direct the musical service, and particularly of the psalms, that rendered grateful acknowledgments to God for His goodness, and the mercy which endureth for ever.

10-21.—The days of Joiakim were posterior to those of Zerubbabel; and there seems to have been one descent by his time from the priests who went up to Jerusalem at the first return from Babylon, and whose names are given in verses 1-7. There seems, however, to have been some change in the pronunciation of the names during that interval, and so we have Melicu for Malluch, Shebaniah for Shechaniah—Harim for Rehum—Meraioth for Meremoth—Ginnethon for Ginnetho—Miniamin for Miamin—Moadiah for Maadiah—Sallai for Sallu. But previous to the statement of these descents from the chief priests, we have the genealogy of the high-priest Jeshua carried down by several generations, and that as far as a hundred years, it is thought, after Nehemiah—insomuch that Jaddua, with whom the list is concluded, is stated by Josephus to have been the high-priest who received Alexander the Great on his entry into Jerusalem. At this rate it is most probable that the genealogy of verses 10 till 12 was inserted in the book of Nehemiah by some later hands.

22-29.—Eliashib was the contemporary high-priest with Nehemiah. Is not Johanan of verse 22 the Jonathan of verse 11?... The names of those Levites who were recorded in the successive priesthoods of Eliashib, Joiada, Johanan, and Jaddua, seem to commence from verse 24. If the chief among the priests were only recorded down to Nehemiah's days, then the Darius of verse 22 must have been Darius Nothus, the immediate successor of Artaxerxes Longimanus; but if it be Darius Codomanus who is meant, then he was contemporary with the high-priest Jaddua in the following century, and is the Darius who was conquered by Alexander the Great.... The insertion of one's name in the record seems to have been an honour discontinued at intervals. Whether it was the national or the scriptural record it must have been highly prized; and as a reward to those who earned such a distinction, or as a gratification to their relatives, the names of such may have been engrossed and transmitted to us in the Bible—which perhaps will account for so many partial and isolated enrolments.... The musicians and porters of verses 24 and 25, flourished in the days of Joiakim, and also of Nehemiah, who did not quit Jerusalem till Eliashib became high-priest in the place of his father.... Then follows the ceremony of dedicating the wall.

30-47.—The Levites and singers had many of them been called up from the country upon this occasion. The priests and Levites purified themselves before they proceeded to purify others—whether men or things. This was probably done by the sprinkling of the water of purification. (Num. xix. 9-20.)... The procession of the grandees seems to have been upon the wall, in two separate companies, one to the right and the other (verse 38) to the

left. Nehemiah followed at the rear of the latter, till they met at the opposite place from whence they had diverged. Ezra, again, was in front of the first or right-hand division. They at length stood still in the prison-gate, and seem to have met in the temple. (verse 40.) The names of verses 41 and 42, compared with those of verses 1-21, may perhaps clear up, or perhaps still more obscure the chronology of these events.... It is pleasant to observe how readily the popular feeling is enlisted on the side of a good cause, when thus set prominently forth by the upper classes of society. Business was superadded to or succeeded this great celebration of dedicating the wall, which was tantamount to the dedication of the city that it encompassed. On the same day were appointed collectors for all the ecclesiastical dues—the ecclesiastics who took such a chief part in this solemn service being at that time in great favour. The singers seem to have had a good deal of extra professional service laid upon them. "The ward of purification," which they had to do with, may have been the guardianship of the temple against the approaches of the unclean. The singers and porters got their daily portion; and the tithes due to the Levites were set apart for them, while the Levites set apart the portion of what they got which belonged to the priests.

NEHEMIAH XIII. 1-9.—"On that day" may signify either the very day of the dedication of the wall, or its anniversary.... Unless "to the tenth generation" be equivalent to "for ever," even as the reading of a bill in Parliament on "that day six months," signifies its being cast out conclusively, there seems a discrepancy between verse 1 and Deuteronomy xxiii. 3. At all events, we have another

example of the manner in which God deals with aggregates or races of men. It was well that the Israelites on the present occasion acted faithfully.

Tobiah being an Ammonite, Eliashib's connexion with him was unlawful. He acted most unworthily of his office as high-priest; and one can sympathize with the indignation of Nehemiah, not merely at the alliance with Tobiah, but with the admission of him within the precincts of the temple. The civil power in this instance had the advantage over the ecclesiastical, in having a greatly better cause. The expulsion of Tobiah was, in fact, the expulsion of one who had abundantly proved himself an enemy to Israel.... From verse 6, as well as from ch. v. 14, we ascertain the duration of Nehemiah's first visit to Jerusalem—even twelve years. He made a second visit.

10-22.—Nehemiah proceeds in the work of reformation. The ecclesiastical dues may have been collected from the people, but not given them—withheld, perhaps, by the rulers acting as lay-impropriators. This was enough to drive the ecclesiastics from the temple to their places in the country. But Nehemiah both remonstrated with the rulers and recalled the Levites—after which the tithes came in more regularly, and in virtue of the appointments which were made, were distributed more faithfully than before.—Nehemiah prays that God would not forget this good work; and give me, O Lord, to feel the comfort and confidence of my labour in the Lord not being in vain.

The next abuse to which he addressed himself was Sabbath profanation. There was not only the carrying, but the buying and selling of goods on that day. One can understand how the men of Tyre might offer for sale; but the Jews ought not to have purchased. He rebuked the

chiefs among his countrymen, and shut the city on the Sabbath against the dealers, whom he would not even suffer to show themselves about the wall—a most salutary forth-putting of the civil authority in things sacred.

23-31.—This reform by Nehemiah is understood to have taken place from twelve to at least twenty years after the like reform by Ezra. Nehemiah went about his with more of personal energy; and, indeed, both acted very much in their respective characters of civil and ecclesiastical rulers. He intromitted with them by strength of hand; and while most deeply and sensitively fearful of God, discovered himself throughout to have been fearless of man. He dealt equally by all ranks; and as on a former occasion, he remonstrated intrepidly with the rulers—so now the highest ranks of the priesthood are made to experience the impartial firmness and equity of his administration. Eliashib, the high-priest, had the disgrace upon him of a double unlawful alliance—an alliance by marriage with Sanballat, the Horonite, as well as with Tobiah, the Ammonite. Nehemiah rebukes these disorders by an appeal to the bygone history of Solomon—a passage in their national annals fitted to tell on the national feelings of his countrymen. Altogether, he is a fine specimen of a religious layman of high rank and consideration in the commonwealth. One likes the religious tenderness which he all along evinces, and yet a tenderness which did not restrain the exercise of a strong and through-bearing authority in the cause of reformation. The book concludes with three instances of this—his expulsion of strangers—his appointment and assignation of their respective charges to the ecclesiastical office-bearers—and, lastly, his enforcement of the requisite offerings, both for the service of the temple

and for the maintenance of those engaged in it. Altogether, Nehemiah has a very high place among the Scripture characters.

ESTHER.

Esther i. 1-9.—We shall not pronounce on the various opinions which relate either to the authorship of this book, or to the time of the events which it records—saving that I may remark the special verses which favour one opinion more than another. For the canonicity of Esther there is as good common external evidence as for any other books of the Old Testament—besides which, we have the monumental evidence grounded on the constant observation of the feast of Purim. We, therefore, hold it in the same veneration with other Scripture—notwithstanding the charge that the name of God does not once occur in it. Nevertheless, it forms a most impressive record of the Divine providence—and a providence put forth, too, on behalf of His own people, whose history and preservation are so linked with all the objects of revelation.... The extent of Ahasuerus' dominion marks out, as the era of this history, one of the most flourishing periods of the Persian kingdom. Shushan, I should imagine, is Susa.... The law of verse 8 was a law of liberty in regard to drinking, in opposition to the old law of ἢ πιθι ἢ απιθι—*aut bibi aut abi*—drink or away....Note the distinction of place between the entertainment of Ahasuerus and that of Vashti—the one in the garden-court, the other in the palace.

10-22.—Vashti's refusal to shew herself before the guests of the king, is generally approven of by ladies;

and may, indeed, have proceeded from the recoil of a feminine delicacy from such an exhibition.... The references which can be made from this to the other Scriptures are not many; yet we may here notice the corroboration of Ezra for the seven princes or counsellors of Persia.... The contempt and the wrath which they alleged would be the consequences of Vashti's impunity, were—contempt on the part of wives, and wrath on the part of husbands. It was well in these ages of despotic power, that Vashti did not fare worse for her disobedience—that instead of a decree of perpetual separation against her, she was not strangled or brought to the scaffold. Whatever may be thought of the equity of her sentence, a good moral, at least, was founded on it—even that every man should bear rule in his own house—which is expressly a Divine, and not unfit for being made the subject of a human law.... Amid the various opinions respecting the identification of the king, it is surely not unimportant that an Ahasuerus is expressly so named both in Ezra iv. 6, and Daniel ix. 1.

Esther ii. 1-9.—Ahasuerus probably remembered Vashti with feelings of compunction; and as the immutability of Persian ordinances did not allow of her recall, the wise and politic counsellors recommended, as a diversion of the king's mind, that measures should be taken to replace Vashti—measures which were quite in keeping with the polygamy and the licentiousness of those times.... The things for purification are specified below in verse 12.

The evolutions of Providence in this graphic and memorable history begin with Mordecai, who may be he that went with Zerubbabel to Jerusalem, and afterwards returned. (Ezra ii. 2.)... There is a controversy respecting

the person who had been carried away with Jeconiah. Some contend it was Kish, an ancestor of Mordecai. Others, as Poole, that it was Mordecai himself, and so he assigns an earlier place to this history than is done by many. Jehoiachin is called Jeconiah by Jeremiah. (xxiv. 1.) This would still make Mordecai very old.... Had he any hand in bringing Esther to the king's house? Did he obtrude her on the notice of Hegai, or was it Hegai, or one of his emissaries, that made the first advances herein?

10-23.—It would appear that after having been with the king, each of these women was consigned to what is here called "the second house"—different from the one she had left, and which was under the charge of Hegai—that is, to the house of the concubines in the custody of Shaashgaz, and where she seems to have been kept permanently as one of the members of the seraglio. Esther required nothing in the way of ornament, or setting off, as many of the others did, to recommend her the more to the king. She was the object of general admiration, on the strength of a native loveliness which needed no foreign aid.... The interval between the great feast given in Vashti's time, and the accession of Esther to the throne, was from the third to the seventh year of the king's reign, or about four years.... There is a dubiety in regard to the gathering of the virgins a second time.... Mordecai must have been an official—perhaps a head porter; and the dutifulness of Esther to him is a fine trait in her character.

Perhaps Bigthan and Teresh were wroth at the honours conferred on Mordecai. But this is quite conjectural.... The story progresses, and we perceive how the God of Providence opens up a way for the accomplishment of

His designs, throughout the manifold complexities of human affairs—evincing in this way, that overruling as He does the most intricate and varied combinations of all sorts of agency, Himself is all in all.

Esther iii.—The reason is not given why Mordecai refrained from doing homage to Haman. Yet it would seem as if the king had commanded such reverence to be done him. But the more inexplicable the proximate causes of the events in this interesting history, the more are we shut up to the conclusion of a special Providence overruling them all. From verse 4 we should infer that Mordecai had stated as his apology for not rendering prostrations to Haman, that he was a Jew, and his religion forbade it—and that the matter was carried up to Haman, to see whether this plea would be sustained. This may perhaps account for the extension of Haman's wrath from Mordecai to all of his nation.... The object of the lot was to determine what month and day should be fixed upon for the execution of his meditated vengeance. This is more fully brought out in the Septuagint version. I do not think it necessary to suppose that the lot was cast every day. It may have been done all at once—each of the days being then brought to the test, till the lot fell for the thirteenth day of the twelfth month.... The immense bribe offered by Haman was declined (verse 11) by the king; but he must have been a heedless and heartless despot after all, that could consent to so barbarous and cold-blooded a proposal. There must have been a considerable interval between the issuing of the orders and their execution—even though the decree had not been sent forth for some time after the scribes had been called.

There was a providence in the lot being so ordered as to allow of such an interval. No wonder that the capital was perplexed.

ESTHER IV.—The outcry and lamentation of Mordecai and the Jews were such as might have been looked for, and also the grief of the queen, who felt as a Jew. The intermediate messages by Hatach, between her and her uncle, show how Mordecai could convey information to her (as in ch. ii. 22) without any personal converse. It was quite natural and right in Esther to state her difficulty to Mordecai, and it is to be hoped not quite necessary for him to repel it by any appeal to her selfishness, or her fears for her own safety. There were great faith and piety, however, in this answer of Mordecai—an unshaken confidence in the power and faithfulness of God, and a most right and religious interpretation of the Providence which had brought Esther to the exalted place which she now occupied. Then follows the noble and high-minded and patriotic resolve of Esther; and also the evidence of her strong religious tendencies—seeing that she prepared for her undertaking by a religious observance, in which she called upon all her countrymen to join with her. Her maidens were probably either Jews or proselytes. They would probably be of her own choosing—and essentially Jewish as she was in heart, it was quite to be expected that she should fix upon those of her own faith.

ESTHER V.—The inner court must have been visible from the king's sitting-room; and it was death by the law for any one who was uncalled to be seen there, except the king held out to him his golden sceptre. But He who

turneth the hearts of kings whithersoever he wills, disposed Ahasuerus in favour of Esther; and so there took place a most prosperous interview between them.... The promise or the oath to give unto "the half of the kingdom" is not without other Scriptural examples. (Mark vi. 23.) There must, it would appear, have been two banquets—a preparatory and a final one—the first request being for a further opportunity to prefer an ultimate one. Various reasons can be conjectured for this adjournment, which need not be here specified. Certain it is that this delay gave room for other important stages and steps towards a far more striking catastrophe—as Haman's elation between the two banquets—his renewed indignancy of feeling towards Mordecai—his communication of the same to Zeresh, and her advice thereupon—lastly, the preparation of the gallows, in which we behold so strong an exemplification of what is said in Psalm vii. 14-16—"Verily, he made a pit, and digged it, and fell into the ditch which he made."

April, 1845.

ESTHER VI.—The wakefulness of the king, and his call for the records of his kingdom, are strongly indicative of a special Providence; and one likes to treasure up the examples of this in the book of Esther, as so many confirmations of its divinity. The special direction of his mind to Mordecai speaks of a guiding and overruling hand in the whole of this history. Haman, with all his dignity, could only come the length of the outward court, and stand there till called for. The king had to be told of his being there, it not being visible from his apartment as the inner court was. (ch. v. 1, 2.) These minute harmonies are not unworthy of being marked. Observe how

the king was prepared beforehand, by the workings of his own spirit, for the proposal he made to Haman, who just came in at the conjuncture when the *dénouement* would be most effective. In proportion to the dignities which Haman was proposing, as he thought, for himself, was the mortification of having these heaped on his most hated adversary—himself bearing a chief part in thus doing him honour. No wonder at the shame and bitterness of his consequent mortification. Zeresh does not seem to have certainly known that Mordecai was a Jew, though Haman must. (ch. iii. 6.) Meanwhile, at this stage, the king seems to have been unconscious of all respecting Mordecai, but the part which he had taken for his own safety.

ESTHER VII.—The second banquet at length arrived. It does not appear whether Esther had ever before revealed her Jewish extraction to the king; but he is virtually told of it now. It was an effective part of her statement to bring in herself as one of Haman's intended victims—a circumstance which would probably tell more upon the king than the destruction of all the Jewish people, to which, indeed, he had before given his consent. It was an awful moment for guilty Haman, who could not fail to be terror-struck. He knew the manner of despotic monarchs, and foresaw the fatality that was hanging over him.... The position of Haman, which gave fresh provocation to the king on his return from the garden, was no doubt accidental. The covering of his face by the attendants was the fell precursor of his approaching execution. It even reads terrifically. No wonder that Solomon in the Proverbs speaks so formidably of the "wrath

of a king." The wrath of Ahasuerus had been kindled to great fierceness, and nothing but the death of the wretched man could appease it.—May justice ever reign amongst us, but save us from cruel and capricious despotism.... What a strikingly retributive character it gives to the whole transaction—that Haman should have been hanged on the gallows he raised for Mordecai.

ESTHER VIII.—Mordecai was put in Haman's place, having obtained the oversight of his house, his ring, and his official dignities. The house was given to Esther, who set her uncle over it, of whose relationship to herself she now told the king. Still the decree against the Jews was in force, and, on the Persian maxim of immutability, could not be recalled. But though not reversed, as Esther would have had it, it was neutralized by the liberty of resistance given to the Jews, with the known countenance of royalty upon their cause. This was the method which the scribes took to extricate the difficulty—for though Esther and Mordecai were commissioned to write "as it liked them," it behoved to be in such terms as did not amount to the direct repeal of a previous ordinance.... It does not seem that the Jews were empowered to fight aggressively, but only against those who would assault them, and in their own defence. The only wonder is, that after this any should have ventured to attack them. It was a day of jubilee to the capital of Persia as well as to all the Jews. It is less to be wondered at that many became Jews, and this from fear, than that any should have been so bold, when the thirteenth day of Adar came, as to have fallen upon a people who were now so obviously in high favour with their all-powerful king.

ESTHER IX. 1-10.—It does not clearly appear whether the enemies of the Jews assembled against them, in the first instance, so as to justify them in repelling the attack. They gathered together, it is said, against all who sought their hurt; but there is no evidence of their hurtful and hostile deeds on that day, whatever may have been their hostile dispositions. It is said that the fear of them fell on all the people, which makes it the more unlikely that any should have assaulted them. It is afterwards said of the Jews that they smote their enemies; but this may only be those who felt towards them as enemies, not those who, on that day, acted against them as enemies. But what gives a still more painful apprehension of there being the spirit of vengeance in their conduct, is the statement, that they did what they would to those who hated them—not to those who hurt, but who hated them. And on this principle, and this alone, it is to be feared, were five hundred men slain in the palace of Shushan, where it was least of all likely that there would be aught like a bodily attack upon the Jews. It is further revolting to read of Haman's ten sons being slain, unless they had personally been working mischief against the Jews.

11-19.—The question whether the Jews fought because they were assaulted, or fought merely because they knew of the hostile disposition of those whom they put to the sword, affects very seriously my feeling towards Esther. If the former, she was excusable in seeking for another day of slaughter; but if the latter, it pains and disturbs me to think of such foul barbarity in a female as to seek for a prolongation of this work of butchery, by which five hundred were killed the first day, and—thanks to her petition—three hundred were killed on the second. Even

the request that the slain sons of Haman should be hung in chains upon the gallows is abundantly revolting, as coming from her. Henry thinks there must have been assaults on the part of the enemy both days, which would alleviate the charge against Esther. It is said, and this is so far honourable to the Jews, that they laid not their hands on the spoil, which they were fully empowered to do by the royal warrant. (ch. viii. 11.)... This was a fearful slaughter that took place in the provinces. The king intimated to the queen that it would be so—as if to check any disposition of hers for the effusion of more blood. But no.—One wonders not, however, at the festivity and gladness of the Jews on the occasion—a barbarity which, so long as war lasts, will be repeated on like occasions to the latest ages.

20-32.—Mordecai, it is thought, by writing these things, drew up a general account of the whole transactions; and some consider that it was this book. This may have been extensively distributed at the time; but the letters seem to have been distinct from the other; and the object of these was to establish the fourteenth and fifteenth days of Adar as an anniversary, both festive and charitable, in commemoration of the great deliverance. Thus they would continue to do as they had begun. The name of this anniversary was taken from the lot which Haman had cast for the determination of the day of his purposed destruction of the Jews, turned by the good providence of God into days of rescue and rejoicing. Mordecai's injunction for the anniversary was consented to by the Jews. It would appear as if a second letter, more express and authorative than the first, had to be issued for the observance of the same. It cannot be regarded as a religious

festival—for this were adding to the institutions of Divine appointment—but simply as a great national commemoration of a most celebrated episode in the history of the Jews. The king is not mentioned as having had to do with the authorization of this observance. It was abundantly confirmed, however, by the decree of Esther, who wrote with all authority; and it is kept up, we understand, by the Jews to this day. There seems to have been a joint or mutual concurrence in the matter. Besides Esther's decree the Jews also decreed for themselves. (verse 31.)... "The matters of the fastings and their cry" seem to intimate that the anniversary began with mournings, in commemoration of the danger, and ended with rejoicings, in commemoration of their deliverance therefrom.

ESTHER X.—The tribute imposed by Ahasuerus must have been a distinguishing act of his reign, since it is thus singled out by the historian. I fear, however, that it has not been so recorded in profane history as to throw light on the identification of Ahasuerus with any particular king of Persia: and neither, I fear, does the greatness here ascribed to his prime minister, though engrossed in the book of the Chronicles of Media and Persia.... The flourishing state of the Jews, too, in this period, was a notable point in their history; and who knows but a flood of illustration and evidence may yet be thrown on Scripture by the decipheration of those characters, which so abound in Egypt and Asia. Progress has been made with the Egyptian hieroglyphics; and as far as it goes is confirmatory of the Mosaic narrative. The pictures which have been discovered there are replete with information. Now, such pictures and characters are being excavated

now at Nineveh; and who knows what may be yet awaiting us, should the same excavations be prosecuted among the tumuli of ancient Babylon.... We have now arrived at the termination of the historical Scriptures of the Old Testament.

JOB.

JOB I. 1-5.—There is a very distinct Scriptural testimony for the inspiration of this book in 1 Cor. iii. 19.... Uz, where Job lived, was Edom. (Lam. iv. 21.)... We disclaim all consent to this being an allegorical and not a literal history; and we found our disclaimer on the subsequent references in the Bible to Job as a real personage—as in James v. 11, and still more in Ezekiel xiv. 14-20, where he is ranked with Noah and Daniel, of whose reality no one doubts. Would the prophet have thus mixed a fictitious with real and historical characters?... Job's country was east in relation to Egypt—the country which, from its superior population and power, was the most likely to stamp and give currency to the denominations of other lands; and so wherever the writer of this book was situated, he might call Edom the east—just as what we call the East Indies is so called in all parts of the world.... There seem to have been periodic family festivals given by the sons of Job; and after these were over, it was his continual practice to hold a religious observance with them, in which the two great elements of faith and repentance had their respective shares. There was both a purification and an offering.... These patriarchal sacrifices, apart from the Jewish law, are interesting.

6-22.—Though Job's history, as a whole, is not allego-

rical, yet the transcendental and supernatural parts of it may, as probably were the representations in 1 Kings xxii. 19, Zech. iii. 1, and Rev. xii.—all of them more or less like the representation in this passage. We have here set forth, at least, the existence of a great spiritual adversary, and God's permission of his wiles and inflictions for the trial of men. Satan's account of himself is in keeping with the account of him by an Apostle, as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour.... The "sons of God" suggest the idea of the good angels—the locality of the representation being in heaven .... The first experiment was made upon his property, and then upon his relatives, and last of all, upon his person. Job stood the two first, though they extended to the loss of all that he had—the loss both of his wealth and of his children. The successive reports brought in to him were very trying—yet they did not overset his religious composure and resignation. The utterance which they brought forth has become one of the most precious memorabilia of Scripture—"The Lord giveth, and the Lord taketh away."... It is well now to note the allusions to the Old which occur in the New Testament. The nakedness of man at his entry and exit, is of a piece with the Apostle's saying—that we brought nothing into the world, and certain it is we can take nothing out of it.

JOB II.—This, though it may be truth veiled in an allegory, is still a most instructive representation. The very expression of Satan moving God to destroy Job *without cause*, points to a very important rule in the Divine administration, according to which the cause of a destructive temptation is something in a man's self, a sin, for example,

leading on to a larger and a larger. There was no such cause in Job why he should be tempted to his destruction. This we are sensible but removes the difficulty—yet that one step is charged with a most important lesson to us—that whatever darkness it may leave undispersed on the ways and doings of God, we are thereby told that to sin now lands us in a larger temptation afterwards, or invests Satan with a greater power of ascendency over us—in full harmony with all our experience.... The "skin for skin" has a devilish sound in it. He had tried Job in his property and near relatives—he now gets leave to try him in his person. Against the first temptations Job stood his ground, and, at the commencement, against this last one also. But the further history of it, in its progress and upshot, is spread over the whole of this venerable book.

The deportment of his three friends at the outset of their visit is very touching. Something might perhaps be gathered as to the locality of Job from the designations of these three. Eliphaz the Temanite is supposed to have sprung from Teman, the grandson of Esau; (Gen. xxxvi. 11 ;) and Bildad from Shuah, the son of Abraham by Keturah. (Gen. xxv. 2.)

Job III. 1-12.—I feel now as if I were entering upon a more frequent encounter than heretofore with the difficulties of Scripture. I should date Job's departure from duty at the very commencement of his reported speeches to his friends. He at once gives up the language of resignation when he curses his day, or, in other words, complains that he was born—as if God had done him an injury by bringing him into existence—seeing that now

such a burden of wretchedness was laid upon it. Yet, let it be well remarked, that though he curses his day, he does not, as Satan predicted he would, curse his God. ... What a force and variety there are in his forms of execration—not all of them equally intelligible. Let the night, too, be cursed as well as the day, and let both be alike anathematized, either by those whose office it is to pronounce lamentations upon the dead, or rather—as the word for mourning signifies Leviathan, by whom in Scripture Satan is represented—let there fall, on the anniversary of my birth, the worst curses of magicians or conjurors, who raise the infernal spirits by their spells.... The obvious poetry of this effusion bespeaks the hand of a dramatist, who may yet preserve the whole substance of this impassioned dialogue between Job and his friends, and keep throughout by the truth of history.

13-26.—Job sighs for the grave, and gives a most touching and eloquent description of it. It would put him on a par with the most prosperous and great ones of the earth, but whose greatness had now passed away; and also on a par with those who perished on the entrance of life, and never tasted either of its bitterness or its joys. "There the wicked cease from troubling, there the weary are at rest," is one of the Scripture's prime memorabilia. He proceeds to question the ways of God in giving life to the wretched, or in keeping them alive. He felt his own way in particular to be so beset and fenced round, that its openings and extrications were hidden from his view. "His sighings came before he ate;" or, the solace and supports of life were embittered by its sorrows. And yet it would appear, that even in his former state of prosperity he was not free from the apprehension of what had

befallen him. He seems to have had a fearful and foreseeing spirit even then—the same which dictated his precautionary sacrifices in behalf of his children. Such a habit is usually the best preparation, nay, the best protection and preventive against all visitations of trouble—yet the trouble came. Thus Job assumed the language of a repiner before he was exasperated thereto by the speeches of his friends.

Job iv. 1-11.—The parties seem each to have taken their respective grounds from the outset of this dialogue—Job as a repiner, and his friends as rebukers of Job. Eliphaz, with something like an apologetic introduction, dissents obviously from Job, dissatisfied with what he had just said. Perhaps he intended to soften the reproach by complimentary allusions to his past life—and then he charges him with giving way to the despondency and faint-heartedness against which he had so often tried to dissuade others.... The sixth verse would pass easily into what follows, were its question thus to be understood—Ought not thy fear or piety then to be thy confidence now, and the uprightness of thy ways then to be thy hope now? For who ever perished being innocent, or when were the righteous cut off? It is the wicked only who perish and are consumed by that power before which the strength of lions or of lion-like tyrants and oppressors must give way. It does not certainly appear that Eliphaz is yet charging Job with hypocrisy, but perhaps only urging an argument, grounded on his past life, for retaining an unshaken trust in God. It may be understood, however, in either way.

12-21.—This vision is often referred to as one of the

most impressive and impressively told lessons in Scripture. Whether this was a dream or a reality—in either way it may have been a special message from above to Eliphaz. In these early ages God did reveal himself to men, as to Balaam and others; and there is nothing in the controversy between Job and his friends to interdict the notion that there may have been inspiration on both sides, any more than in the sharp contention which took place between Paul and Barnabas. The *argumentum à fortiori* from men to angels is well put; and the whole lesson may yet be understood thus—as if Eliphaz but charged Job with impatience under a mere chastisement or trial, instead of yet pronouncing on him as one whose afflictions bespoke the state of irrecoverable condemnation into which he had fallen. His speeches, however, and those of his friends, pass onwards to this severer style of rebuke; and even already some of the utterances are such as naturally to provoke and exasperate the difference still more between Job and his so-called comforters.... In verse 20 Job may have felt himself likened to those who perish for ever, and who, unpitied by all, undergo the penalty of an everlasting destruction.

JOB v. 1-16.—The remonstrance of Eliphaz proceeds; and its tendency to exasperate increases. Job might readily understand himself to be meant as "the foolish man" and "the silly one." He might have felt the cruelty of turning even the death of his children, which should have called forth the liveliest sympathy of his friends, into a matter of reproachful insinuation. And yet, though very incautious and heartless in Eliphaz, he may still only mean the liability of men in general to afflictions—even

though only for trial and parental discipline by the hand of God, to whom he would advise Job to commit himself. He then expatiates impressively on the dealings of God's providential government.... The statement that "He taketh the wise in their own craftiness," is important as being quoted by an Apostle, (1 Cor. iii. 19,) and in the form, too, which marks an inspired saying—so that Eliphaz herein spake as he was moved by the Holy Ghost—whence it would appear that there was a guidance from above, not with Job only, but even with the interlocutors in this dialogue. This opens up a field of interesting observation and inquiry.... "Man is born unto trouble as the sparks fly upward," is another of the most illustrious memorabilia in Holy Writ.

17-27.—This part of the address of Eliphaz bespeaks his hope of Job, and intimates that he has not given him up as a fixed and final reprobate. He may still, for all that is said here, be a child of God under discipline and correction. Though the sentiment of verse 17 is identical with that of Heb. xii. 5, 6, yet the latter is a quotation from Prov. iii. 11, 12. Eliphaz still holds out to Job the promise and the benefit of a good result from the visitation now upon him; and on this he would ground a lesson of patience and a dissuasive from despair—bidding him know this for his good, or telling him to acquaint himself with the ways of God, and be at peace. The wounds He had now inflicted might still be healed. What a blessing is contained in the being "hid from the scourge of the tongue."... "The league with the stones of the field" is variously explained. There is no difficulty in apprehending the general promise—that both the animate and inanimate creation should be kept from hurting him.

One particular of the promised restoration is, that he should be re-instated in the domestic circle, and without sin—an allusion it is thought to the sins of his former household.... "The full age, like as a shock of corn," is a notable Scripture image.

JOB VI. 1-10.—Job did not give in to Eliphaz, nor desisted from his complaint, but continues to expatiate on the magnitude of his calamity and grief. His words were re-absorbed as it were on the eve of their utterance, or going forth of him. He felt them inadequate to the expression of his sorrows; and so these sorrows were taken back as it were and festered within him. The thought of God being against him wasted and left him spiritless. The animals do not complain or send forth an outcry when they have enough to satisfy; and on this principle Job vindicates his lamentations.... In verse 6, and perhaps verse 7, he may be referring to the speech of Eliphaz as insipid and unsavoury—because not seasoned with salt, and certainly not words in season for him. "The sorrowful meat," however, might be interpreted into the sore and bitter distresses wherewith God had visited him. And he prays for release from these by death, in the speedy prospect of which he would bear up determinedly against the weight of his sorrows. And so he bids Him "not spare." There is something of defiance in this—nay, of a challenge grounded on the allegation of innocence.... His non-concealment of God's words may be held as tantamount to his fulfilment of them—in that he did not stifle the impression of them upon himself, and did not withhold from others the lessons and obligations which they conveyed.

11-21.—He seems now to address himself more particularly to the speech of Eliphaz. My strength is not that of stones or brass, that I can hope to survive my present visitation, or enjoy the good things, by holding out the prospect of which you but mock and flatter. This latter end of my life is such that I have neither the desire nor the expectation of its being lengthened. Can I not vindicate myself against your reproaches, or am I but a fool, and not able for this? You should not have driven me thus to my defence. Pity, and not reproach, is what I should have gotten at your hands. Such cruelty to man, and more especially to a friend, proves that there is not the fear of God. Ye are like the shallow brooks that dry up in the season of extreme heat, and so have least water when there is most need of it—thus are you to me in my affliction. These brooks make a great show in winter, when blocked up with ice, or when snow is accumulated in their channels. Travellers were led to expect refreshment from their cooling draughts, but they found only a dry and deserted bed, and were sorely disappointed. And thus do ye fail in aught of comfort or ministration—afraid of coming nigh, or afraid, perhaps, of evincing any such sympathy as might lead me to expect or to ask for succour at your hands.

22-30.—But I have not sought to borrow, or be a burden to you; and this selfish fear of yours has found nothing in my conduct to justify it. I have not asked you to redeem my stolen property from those men of might who have forcibly seized upon it. Nay, I am willing to be taught by you, would you but specify the sin which you reproachfully allege to have been the cause of my sore chastisement. You have not spoken to my understanding, but

treat me as if I were a desperado or a maniac. You make no allowance for the extremity of my grief and pain.... Instead of this they trample upon his helplessness; and after their show of friendship had emboldened him to speak, they took advantage of the freedoms into which they had thus ensnared him.... Be prevailed on to look at me, and see my condition, whether it does not justify all the complaints which I have uttered, and because of which you so blame me, as if I dealt in a false exaggeration. Weigh the matter over again, and you will find that I am right in this matter—that I speak rightly and judge rightly—and more especially, that I make a true estimate of the perversities which you have uttered against me.

JOB VII. 1-10.—The "appointed time" here might be rendered a "warfare." But keep by the actual translation, and you have the parallelism of the two clauses—a settled period for the life of man, just as there is a settled term for the service of a hireling. As a servant desires for rest under the shade of night, or as the hireling looks for the termination of his work, so do I look and long for death. ...For he, Job, can do no good through the day, and his nights—so sweet and refreshing to the labourer—are to him nights of painfulness. And he appeals to his visible appearance, which he had desired his friends to look upon, that they might therein see the justification of his complaints. By adverting to the shortness and wretchedness of his life, he seems to vindicate his wish for the termination of it. He then, I incline to think, addresses himself to God—when he bids him remember the frailty and unhappiness of his days.... The simple pathos of "the

eye that sees him now soon seeing him no more," is the frequent ingredient of many a description that touches upon death; and so with the clause of "the place that now knows him knowing him no more." If God look on the hills they tremble—if He look frowningly on man he dies; and rather this death, does he contend, than such a life of restlessness and agony.

11-21.—Upon this the magnitude of his distress, Job strengthens himself in the determination to prefer death rather than life; and there does not want the spirit of remonstrance against God for the prolongation of those sufferings which he would fain escape, even though by dissolution.... Am I so very outrageous that I need to be thus kept in?—It is because of the terrors and the agonies wherewith Thou hast beset me, both night and day, that I would rather give up my being.—Let me join in the sentiment of Job—that I would not live alway—not, however, because I loathe it, but because of my faith in Christ, and that I reckon to depart and be with Him to be far better. When he asks of God—let me alone, it is as if he said—spare me or kill me. He puts the question—why God should make so much of man, by subjecting him to such experimental processes, and making him the object of such continual trials, on the result of which he figures that God is looking intently. He seems here to experience a glimpse or visitation of the truth, and confesses, like one under discipline, and coming to himself for a little—that he indeed had sinned—that he was perverse, and that God is righteous, yea, and good, or the Preserver of men. But he soon lapses again into complaining, and rather challenges than implores pardon; or even the kindness that would kill him outright, so that

he may die over night, and not be found alive in the morning.

JOB VIII. 1-7.—Now comes a new interlocutor. He also appears in vindication of God and His ways, and, of course, rebukes Job as having complained of them. He does not speak absolutely of Job being a hypocrite, but still he speaks of it hypothetically, or that possibly he might be so. His language is therefore conditional; and so he tells that if he would commit himself unto God, and if he were pure and upright, all should yet be well for him. I can conceive how Job might feel it sufficiently provoking to be so dealt with by his friends—or to be reckoned with by them as if it were a matter of uncertainty whether he was a worthless character or no. And it does seem hard and cruel to advert, in the terms which Bildad has done, to the loss of his children ; and in such a way as to imply at least their sinfulness, or, that in meeting with their death, they met with the retribution which was due to them. On the whole, then, there was nothing in the speech of this second so-called friend of Job that was fitted to allay, but rather to whet his exasperation the more. There is a deal of stern, and often just argument, but an utter absence of sympathy—such as should have infused a balm and a kindliness into the converse that was held with him.

8-22.—He appeals to antiquity for the lessons of a larger experience than we can obtain in this brief life of ours. The words which our fathers uttered out of their hearts, are the products of the wisdom within them. There seems here to be a reference to written records .... The rush comes to nothing without moisture; and so without the

favour of God the hope of the hypocrite must perish. The hypocrite seems likened next to a tree, whose roots are not in mire but in stony ground, and whose branches lean upon the wall, and seem firmly supported, even as the hypocrite leans upon his house. Yet even this promising and goodly-looking tree may be cut off, and wither under the power of the sun—when the place which knows it now shall know it no more.... There is sound general truth in Bildad's affirmations respecting the dealings of God with the upright and the evil; but he leaves open the application of it in an injurious sense to Job, though he does not yet speak decisively against him—for he holds out the prospect both of his own return to prosperity, and of the destruction of his adversaries.

Job ix. 1-10.—Job in this passage seems to express himself aright, both on the sovereignty of God and the subjection which man owes to Him. But he appears to rest this subjection more on the power than on the justice of God—more as that which man must render, than as that which he ought to render—more as a thing of irresistible necessity than of rightful or righteous obligation. He defers to the wisdom and might of the Most High more than he does homage to the rectitude of His dispensations—to which dispensations, however, man must submit, because he cannot do otherwise, he cannot help himself. "Who hath hardened himself against God and prospered?" In the description of this power he comes forth with one of the finest sketches of Natural Theology to be found in Scripture, and, of course, far excelling all that any uninspired writer of antiquity has left behind him.... The supremacy of God over Nature is most magni-

ficently told—and that both in the overruling, nay, the reversing of her processes by a power superior to hers, and in the way of creating and sustaining her. He can move the earth from her stability, He can stay the rising of the sun, He can intercept the light of the stars, and all the other influences upon our world, which were then ascribed to them. All this He can do in anger, for as His wrath is so is His power—the power of Him who made all things, the greatest wonders within our ken, and wonders innumerable beyond it.

11-22.—Job here alleges that the way of God is unseen and incomprehensible, while His power is irresistible. It sounds to me like a sullen and dogged submission to a Being against whom it is vain to contend, however inexplicable or however severe His dispensations might be. Men, however confident or self-sufficient, can yield no effectual help should God be the enemy. How much less should I, who would not attempt to vindicate myself against Him, even though righteous—somewhat like an insinuation that God will take His own way, irrespective of the merits of those upon whom He chooses to wreak His displeasure. It is like ascribing unjust severity to God when he says, "should I supplicate and call upon Him, I would not believe it though He interposed in my favour. For see how He assails me—and that without cause." In these last words Job surely speaks unadvisedly, though many have endeavoured to make the best for him of the former verses. There is an obvious spirit of complaint, which breaks out more declaredly in one place than another—as, less so in verses 19 and 20, more so in verse 21, but most of all in verse 22, which seems tantamount to denial of a moral government. Yet a more favourable

construction may be put on Job's words; and he may be merely advancing the undoubted doctrine that a man's character is not to be judged of by God's dealings with him in this life.

23-35.—The same scourge which destroys the wicked may but try the innocent. Yet it sounds daring in Job to say that God, who afflicts not willingly, laughs at the distresses of the innocent. There seems a spice of reproachfulness against God both here and in the next verse, where he speaks of the earthly prosperity of the wicked, and of the protection which He renders to unjust judges, and then asks—if it be not God who does these things, who else can it be ?... His complaint of the brevity of his days, was probably of his happy days .... Different interpretations hinge upon the question, whether Job is speaking to God or to Bildad, when, in verse 28, he says, "I know that thou wilt not hold me innocent." Thou, Bildad, reproachest me for complaining, and sayest that if I am pure God will redress my calamities; but I am afraid of their continuance, and so thou wilt not hold me innocent. If, on the other hand, I am wicked, I labour in vain to set myself right with God. No appearances of integrity will avail with Him who seeth not as man seeth; and there is no mediator to plead for me. Would He only not overbear me so by the weight of His chastisements, then might I speak when released from the terrors of His hand upon me.—Here he ascribes his inability to vindicate himself, not to the want of a plea in himself, but to the unmeasured power of God's inflictions upon him.... There is much of truth and of sound theology in these speeches of Job, mixed up, however, with outbreakings of complaint and impatience, which he cannot well repress—a body in them

of good principle, disfigured, however, by the blemishes and distempers of weak human nature under sore trials.

May, 1845.

Job x. 1-13.—Job lapses into a still more complaining style than before—" I will leave my complaint upon myself." I will lay the blame wholly upon myself, or, perhaps, I will complain as long as I have a mind to it, however much my friends may reproach me on that account. (ch. ix. 27, 28.) What follows, though capable of being interpreted differently, seems an unbecoming expostulation with God.... Some make these interrogatories so many denials of the hardships which they otherwise seem to charge upon God. Seest Thou so imperfectly, that to find what is in me Thou must try me so? Dost Thou need to make experiments, or to observe, day after day, as man does, to ascertain my character? Thou already knowest that I am not wicked—yet what is the good of these remonstrances? I must submit, for none can deliver me from the hands of the Omnipotent.... By turning the last clause of verse 8 into a question, one can take off from the sting of an apparent accusation of the Most High—Wilt Thou destroy the work of Thy hands? He seems to describe, in verses 10 and 11, the formation of man, as in Psalm cxxxix. 15, 16. These favours, and the sad reversal of them, have all along been in the secret purpose of God, unexpected by me, but known to thyself. He does not renounce God, but surely in haste, and under extreme pressure, he utters unwarrantable things against Him.

14-22.—He speaks aright of God as a judge when he speaks of His not clearing the guilty, yet seems withal, in the anguish of his spirit, to reflect upon His justice,

when he further says, that even though he were righteous, yet would he not be confident of His favour. And so he gives way again, and expatiates on the magnitude of his afflictions and pains.... The changes he had undergone, partly accomplished by the marauding warriors of Arabia, had all been against him. There was the marvellous and the inexplicable, which convey something like an insinuation of the unjustifiable in these dispensations of God. "Thou renewest Thy witnesses," or Thou sendest in these repeated afflictions new tokens and testimonies of Thy displeasure against me. And so he gives himself up to the despair of one who longs for the rest and insensibility of the grave. He murmurs that he had ever gotten life on such hard terms; and yet he craves for a little respite ere it should be terminated—that he may not die under the burden of his present agonies, and perhaps that he may have an interval of calmness for leisurely and profitable reflection on the issues of the state upon which he should then enter.... There is no order in the land of the dead—no order of rank—and there rich and poor, the oppressor and his slave, lie together.

JOB XI. 1-12.—The third friend of Job, Zophar, now, for the first time, takes part in the dialogue, and breaks forth into a still more open and undisguised censure than had yet done either of his predecessors. He speaks contemptuously of Job for his loquaciousness, nay, denounces him for his lies. But what he charges him most explicitly with, is his renunciation of God. When thou mockest—when thou misrepresentest the character of God's dealings with thee, and affirmest the purity of thine own character and views, how can we keep silence? Zophar exaggerates

what Job had said; and then goes on a sort of reciprocal overlapping between the combatants, which makes it quite hopeless that they should come to a common understanding. He then appeals to God, whose wisdom he truly represents as beyond all that is visible to us. We know but a part of His ways; and there are secrets in his administration which far transcend all that is patent or has been made manifest to us. Then follows an impressive description of the perfection and unsearchableness of God, which forms one of the most noted of Bible passages for reference and repetition in all ages. Whatever He pleases to do, who can hinder him? He knoweth both the folly and the wickedness, and will consider aright how to proceed against them. It is the height of presumption in us not to acquiesce; and it marks the frowardness and ungovernableness of man thus to question or resist his Maker.

13-20.—And yet it is not just a full and final condemnation that he passes upon Job. Zophar intimates it as his opinion, that by preparation and prayer, the case is recoverable. But besides the preparation of the heart, and prayer to God, there must be a turning of the hand from evil to good—a renunciation of all wickedness. He promises relief and enlargement upon such a reformation as this. Thou shalt be stedfast, firm, confident, unruffled, free from all the tremors and agitations and disquietudes of fear. He will forget the past misery, nor will he feel the apprehension of its future return. Your light will break forth as the morning; and the mind will rejoice in the light and transparency of its own righteousness. The feeling of security springs on the instant from hope. When thou diggest thou shalt not be disturbed in reaping

the fruit of thy labour, as Isaac was when the wells which he dug were wrested from him by violence. Instead of which he shall be safe as well as prosperous, with none to discompose or make him afraid; yea, rather with many to come about him and sue for his protection and favour. Still Zophar concludes with an alternative which implies both the possibility in itself, and his own suspicion, that Job might be a reprobate, and will not escape his irrecoverable doom; and that as he has lived the life, so he will die the death of the wicked. He thus leaves the provocation unallayed, nay, fiercer than before.

Job xii. 1-10.—Then follows a most natural reaction on the part of Job—first, of contempt for these his so-called comforters—and, secondly, of self-vindication, and complaint that though he knew as much as they, they were presuming to school him in the way they did.—Instead of consolation, you mock at my calamity—you laugh when my fear cometh; (Prov. i. 26;)—this is what God does with the wicked, but what no man is entitled to do to his fellow:—but I will turn me from you, and call upon God himself, and He will answer me.—As for his friends, they were at ease, and looked down upon him who was ready to slip—and made slips too—in the midst of his agitation and sore distress, with the same contempt that they would look on some low and vile utensil. In reply to their inference, by which they would deduce his wickedness from the calamities that had come upon him, he alleges the undoubted fact that wicked men do prosper, do live securely, and are well provided for in this world, which, however inexplicable, must be the doing of God. Even among the inferior creatures, the strong devour and tyrannize over

the unresisting and unoffending weak. And this, too, must be the work of Him who is the lord and proprietor of all, animate or inanimate.

11-25.—(See ch. vi. 30.) The ear tries words even as the mouth tastes meat; and so I will exercise my own judgment upon your sayings. "With the ancient is wisdom;" (see ch. xv. 10. and ch. xxxii. 7;) but with Him who is the ancient of days, there is the highest wisdom of all, and not wisdom only, but strength also. He prevails in all His doings—overturning when He pleases—arresting when He pleases; at one time withholding rain from the earth and it withering, at another pouring it forth so as to inundate and destroy.... The objects and purposes of God are transcendently above those of man. The deceived are subordinate to the deceiver; but both, whether as instruments or subjects, are entirely His, and under Him. He stamps disappointment and mockery on the wisest of men; and He tramples on human power as well as human wisdom, loosing the bonds, or dissolving the tyranny of kings, and then bringing themselves into a state of subjection. He destroys the influence of the most confidential advisers; and in the plenitude of His own omniscience and omnipotence, He brings to nought all the skill and strength of the creature. It is He who buildeth or brings low, who giveth prosperity or distress to nations—the rulers whereof He makes to wander in darkness, and to be at their wits' end, and to reel to and fro like drunken men.... This is a noble description by the afflicted patriarch of the might and supremacy of God.

JOB XIII. 1-13.—After having thus exhibited before his friends the knowledge that he had of God and of His

ways, he claims thereupon an understanding at least equal to theirs. He professes his readiness and desire to reason with God, and before Him to order his cause—while desirous at the same time of turning away from all further converse with these miserable comforters, whose falsehood and folly he denounces, and entreats their silence. Will you speak wickedly for God? He wants no such homage at your hands—no acceptance of His person, at the expense both of truth and justice, on which you have trampled in order to distress and criminate me. He will not be flattered by your fair words respecting Him upon any such terms; but will make full exposure both of your hypocrisy towards Him, and of your cruelty to myself. Here is the difference between me and you: I affirm that God is righteous although He afflicts—you affirm that I am wicked because He afflicts me. Will you not be avenged upon for thus speaking falsely, both for Him and against me? When He rises as a Judge and an Avenger, your memories will be cut off—your bodies will moulder into their own original dust. Hold your peace, for I will speak unto God, come what may.... If this last clause refer to his friends, it may signify—let your reproaches be what you will. If it refer to God, it seems tinged somewhat with defiance—a spirit that does break out in his weakness and distress, though radically and mainly his heart is right with God.

14-28.—Wherefore am I brought to such writhing torture, and to the very brink of death? This seems a hasty outbreaking of impatience—from which he afterwards rights himself, in declaring that come what may he will retain his confidence in God. "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him," is one of the highest among the

notabilia of Scripture. Along with his confidence in God, there is, some would allege, an over-confidence in himself. Yet this is in so far warrantable. The heart of a good man may so far not condemn him as to warrant this confidence. We hold that Job occasionally transgressed this point; but that whenever he came to himself again, he was within it. He cannot restrain his speech, which is directed at one time to his friends, and at another to God: he implores that he may not be overborne by agony or terror; and then will he be in better circumstances for pleading with God, and ordering his argument before Him: he prays that his afflictions may be lessened, and his convictions made clearer: he feels a remorseful sense of his former iniquities; and seems desirous of a respite from his sufferings, that he may be enabled to take a more judicial and intelligent view of his sins.

JOB XIV. 1-12.—The two first verses rank among the Bible's most memorable sayings. The last verse of the preceding chapter—which follows the complaint that Job had just uttered of God, treating him as a malefactor, and marking all his ways, so as to follow up with the stigma of His disapproval and correction the least deviation—this last verse seems like the preface of the present chapter. Verse 3 is somewhat in the tone of a remonstrance with God. Verse 4—a precious Scripture sentence of capital importance in theology. He then prays for a cessation from his sore agony—that he may have some ease and quiet ere he dies, and may be enabled to do service, nor be disabled therefrom by the torture that was laid upon him. If not spared for some time longer, and restored to a state of comfort, he will no longer have

enjoyment in this world. Man is not like a tree, which can spring up anew in the place where it had withered, even long after it had disappeared, and be an ornament to the very landscape in the midst of which it was now growing. He will never re-appear after death on the present earth; but in this passage there is the strong declaration of a faith in that immortality which, after this earth has been burnt up, and these heavens have passed away, awaits the good in the new heavens and new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. Here then we have one of the clearest intimations of a future state to be found in the Old Testament.

19, *York Place.*

13-22.—There seems much in this passage to countenance the belief of Job's faith in a future state. I should be inclined to regard "the set time" as the day of resurrection. Then he will be revived, and answer at the call of the trumpet from heaven. But though then there will be a returning kindness on the part of God, now is the season of chastisement and darkness.—Now Thou shewest Thyself strict to mark, and rigorous to punish. Thou carefully treasurest up the remembrance of my sins, instead of letting them go into forgetfulness, that they might no more be reckoned with. And so he seems to revert from the contemplation of that hope which is beyond the grave, to the melancholy consideration of there being no hope in this life. And in expatiating on the sureness of man's decay and death, he gives a striking description of the geological process by which even continents are wasted, and the firmest materials of nature at length give way. But as in the material so in the moral world—the present state in both will be succeeded by another.... In the

conclusion of the chapter he dwells more on the evanescence of the former than on the restoration of the latter. After death, and while under the power of it, man will neither know the prosperity nor the misfortunes of those who succeed him—though in the last verse, while the decay of his body in the sepulchre is obvious enough, there seems besides this to be somewhat like the dark intimation of a surviving but painful consciousness.

JOB XV. 1-11.—The hostility of his so-called friends becomes more declared and fiercer as the dialogue proceeds. Eliphaz reproaches him, not with the vanity and emptiness alone of his effusions, but with their wickedness and ungodliness—telling him that his speech betrayed the worthlessness of his soul, nay, charging it with dissimulation and falsehood. He also rebukes him for self-conceit—as if he alone were privy to the counsels of the everlasting God; and enjoyed among all his fellows the monopoly of wisdom. The utterance of Job is retorted upon him by Eliphaz. In counterpart to "what ye know the same do I know also," &c., we read here, "what knowest thou that we know not," &c. We have more ancient men than thou art upon our side. We have told you what the comforts of God are, but you reject our admonitions and views—as if you had some truer discernment of the matter that is beyond all we can understand or speak of.

12-21.—The remonstrance gets hotter, and in such terms as must have been very provoking to the sorely agonized patriarch.... The allusion to the winking of his eyes seems very insolent and cruel; yet Job gave occasion for these reproaches by his hasty utterances against God. And there seems to be not the wisdom only, but

the authority of inspiration, in the verses which express man's native and inherent sinfulness. They are often quoted as the props of a sound theology on the question of man's depravity.... We might observe here, how the sayings and traditions of the wise were handed from age to age, and the respect in which they were held. He makes reference to the sentences of men who had so raised themselves by their power and policy, as to be secure from rivalship or invasion. Then follows a deliverance that seems so directly condemnatory of poor Job, as might well lead him to understand it as a palpable crimination of himself—picturing him forth as a wicked and rebellious man. The number of his years is hidden from him —so that he is at all times haunted by the terror of some impending destruction.... The "dreadful sound in his ears" is a poetical and most impressive representation; and the inroad of "the destroyer" a sad remembrancer to the afflicted patriarch.

22-35.—There is here a farther description of the wicked man—of his despair, and danger, and poverty—overwhelming his spirit, so that he is wholly overcome by them; and all this because of his daring rebellion against God in time past, and before he had been thus brought low—when in the defiance and insolence of prosperity, he not only dared his Maker, but spread devastation among the dwellings of his fellow-men—lolling in pride and luxury, and keeping, for a time at least, violent occupation of the place which himself had desolated by his violence. Therefore shall a check be laid upon him. This prosperity of his shall not continue. He will in turn be made the sufferer and the outcast; and by the breath of God's mouth shall all his ill-gotten wealth and greatness

pass away. All this shall come unexpectedly upon him, and long before he is counting upon any such reverses. Let no one trust in deceitful riches, and more especially when gotten by iniquity and depredation. What he hath done to others shall be recompensed to him again. All the promise and apparent security of his good fortune, will soon drop away and be extinguished. Thus will it fare with the hypocrite; and such is the destruction that awaits the house built up by the unlawful means, whether of plunder or treachery.... Vanity in Scripture signifies something of a deeper and more criminal dye than it does now. The term is appropriate when applied to aught which is perishable; but as being penally, so in the present instance it stands associated with iniquity.... To run on "the thick bosses of the buckler" of the Almighty, is a very strong and significant image of daring impiety.

Job xvi. 1-10.—If the portraiture given by Eliphaz of a wicked man was meant to apply to Job, he was obviously wrong. Job had the root of the matter in him, and a justifiable consciousness of this—though in the extremity of his anguish he did give forth effusions of an impatience that formed a spot in his character—but still it was the spot of one of God's undoubted children. These friends of his were indeed miserable comforters, when they ought to have evinced the sympathy which Job professes, and truly we have no doubt that he would have felt for them had their circumstances been exchanged. He here complains of his friends, and then turns to God—alternating as it were betwixt them. It is thus that we understand the seventh and eighth verses as addressed to God—

whereas the ninth and tenth are descriptive of the cruel and unfeeling conduct of his visitors—whose words were as daggers, and who, in gesture and by their looks, gave forth the natural signs of their contempt and hostility against the poor sufferer.

11-22.—In this passage he is more fully set upon God —characterizing at the same time his visitors, into whose hands God hath turned him over. The language here employed is very strongly descriptive of God's adverse dealings with him. There is a force and eloquence in these images of power and terror, and more especially in both the clauses of verse 14. The horn that was defiled in the dust is an emblem of the distinction and dignity that had been now laid prostrate.... We hold that Job's was a warrantable confidence; and that he had the testimony of an unoffending conscience when he made this appeal to God. I regard him as in the state described in 1 John iii. 21—and there is something most resistlessly pathetic and affecting in these invocations—both when he calls on the earth to cover not his blood, or afford any hiding-place to his cry, and when he weeps before God. He longs for justice at the hands of his Maker, and for the manifestation of it, that himself may be vindicated ere he die.

Job xvii.—He continues his complaint—making mention both of his bodily sufferings, and the still crueller injustice of his friends. Their provoking and contemptuous treatment of him was forced at all times upon his observation.—Give me then, O God, the assurance that Thou wilt do me justice, and send me others than these, who might reason the matter with me fairly and kindly. They understand not the meaning of Thy dispensation,

and therefore shall not be honoured or entrusted with the arbitration of my case. They spoke flattery to me before, but now am I become their by-word, instead of a subject for their high-sounding praises. The astonishment of the upright at his sad history may have for its object the detestable hypocrisy of those who aforetime were his parasites, but now derided and abandoned him. In contrast with these the righteous will maintain an unswerving course, amid all the calumny and injustice of their adversaries, and be strengthened in their way.—But as for you, the right part would be to turn from the path on which you have entered. Review your judgment of me, and this should cause you to retract your condemnation—for hitherto you have looked at my case most unintelligently—not that I have any hope of a restoration in this life, in which all my prospects and designs are at an end. My painful thoughts keep me awake all the night, and short are the bright or easy intervals which I enjoy.—My fellowship now is with the grave.—My hopes, at least for this world, are altogether gone; or if ever obtruded on me, they will soon be dissipated like so many deceitful imaginations, or fall to sleep along with me in the dust of the earth.

Job xviii. 1-10.—Then steps forth another of the interlocutors, in greater heat of spirit than before. He complains of Job's idle and endless loquaciousness, and bids him speak more distinctly and to the purpose, that they may know his drift, and reply to him. He retorts the abuse which he charges Job with having heaped upon them, and speaks most cruelly and contemptuously of his distress. There has no speech been yet so insolent and

provoking as the present. The earth is not to make room for Job, or give way before him; but the wicked shall be removed from the earth—and all this accompanied with the plain insinuation that Job himself is an example of their fate, or one of those whose light is extinguished, the steps of whose policy are contravened, whose counsel is brought to nought, who himself is the author of his own undoing, being caught in the snares which himself hath laid. Or by a righteous retribution on his own deceitful plots, he shall be prevailed over by the counterplots of his adversaries. There is obviously in all this a fastening of Job's afflictions upon his misconduct as their cause.

11-21.—Bildad goes on to describe the fate of the wicked man. The terrors which assail him drive him to his feet, in causing him to fly. His strength shall be wasted as if by the consumption and agonies of hunger: the "first-born of death" is some indescribable and appalling cause or form of it. But however uncertain the precise import of separate clauses or expressions, there is no mistaking the general import of this description, and it applies too closely to Job for our acquitting Bildad of all malignity in the putting of it forth. The poor sufferer could have no confidence in his house made with hands, and had already expressed his conviction of an impending death—that king of terrors. We are not aware, however, of any ground of an insinuation that his possessions had been unjustly acquired, so that the house he lived in was not properly his own. But there are terrific menaces launched forth on the sorely tried man, who seems identified with the rebel and the outcast from God—the overthrow of his dwelling place—the destruction of his substance and family—the extinction of his remembrance and name—his banishment

from the world into outer darkness—the extirpation of all his descendants and near relatives. Job had spoken of the astonishment that the righteous would feel in the cruelty of those who made a by-word of him. Bildad predicts that there would be astonishment too, but at the fearful vengeance which had overtaken him as a wicked man, and an exile from God.

JOB XIX. 1-19.—There is great justice in Job's complaint of his friends, who ought to have been ashamed of their hard-hearted speeches.—If I am in fault it is I who suffer by it, and I should have met with your sympathy rather than with your reproaches. I am sensible that what has come upon me is by the hand of God. This I concede to your argument, but not to your conclusion—that because of my desperate wickedness I am given over to final destruction.... Job's error lay in not waiting the evolution of this trial, which was intended rather to prove him than to punish him. It would have been well, for instance, if instead of complaining that when he cried out of wrong he was not heard, it had been that he was not yet heard; and so as to imply a settled confidence that he would be righted at last. And indeed the root of such a confidence was in him, though his chafed and agonized spirit surged over it into effusions of impatience.—Then follows a most pathetic description of what he suffered primarily, by the appointment of God no doubt, yet proximately at the hands of men; and this in the shape of indignity and ingratitude from old friends and acquaintances, and even those of his own nearest relationship.

20-29.—After stating the pains that he suffered in his own person, he breaks out into a most piteous entreaty

that his friends would compassionate one whom God for his own wise reasons had so heavily borne down upon. They should not stand in the place of God, who agonized his flesh for the sake of his spirit—they should not take upon them the office of instructors, more especially when they dealt in such hard and injurious lessons—they should leave the discipline of his inner man with the great spiritual Husbandman; and be satisfied to look at the sufferings of his outer man with such sympathies and kind offices as are prompted by Nature. He then falls back on the ultimate and fundamental grounds of his confidence. He felt that he was right in the main; and to the consolations of a good conscience, he adds the consolations of a most remarkable and far-seeing faith. The passage which here brightens with these is one of the most memorable in the Old Testament:—I shall see my Redeemer for myself and my own comfort, instead of another seeing for me, and pronouncing my condemnation on their own views, as my friends are doing now. He felt that the root of the matter was in him; and that upon this his friends should have made allowance for the utterances of a sorely agitated spirit. He therefore warns them of that coming judgment to which himself looks forward with security, but to which they may well look forward with dismay.

Job xx. 1-10.—Zophar feels more than ever that he and his friends have been personally charged, and launches forth in the terms of a personal altercation. There is an obvious heat of spirit in this reply; and, as usual, the wrath and judgments of God against the wicked are declared, with no endeavour to qualify or prevent the appli-

cation of the sentence against Job himself, who is now made welcome, as far as his friends are concerned, to take the character of a hypocrite and sinner from his youth, as intended particularly for himself. The contrast here put between a former prosperity and a present overthrow, gives it still more the effect not of a general but special description, 'as strikingly expressive of what had befallen the patriarch. There are some durable and embalmed sayings in this speech of Zophar, which are familiar as household words to Bible readers—as "the eye that now seeth him seeing him no more." The children of this description, however, are not just in keeping with the history of Job.

11-29.—Zophar proceeds with the description of a wicked person, and of which Job might readily imagine that himself is glanced at as that person—as if his present distress were the fruit of long bygone sins; and the vices which he cherished but concealed during the days of his prosperity, were now visited with the chastisements which were due to them.—Then follows a fearful recital of the miseries attendant on such a reversal and overthrow—amplified into various particulars, but most of them pointing at a restitution for wrongs formerly committed, at a retribution for offences done against God and man. The poverty which had come on Job, the violence and robbery which had bereft him of his all, must have been forcibly associated in his mind with the statements here made, though in the terms of a general representation. And there is something like the gratification of a vengeful, and malignant, and irritated spirit on the part of Zophar, in the aggravations which he heaps the one upon the other, in the evils that follow in succession

throughout his life, and at last terminate in a final and irrevocable judgment on the unhappy man.

JOB XXI. 1-13.—Job begs that his friends would console him, not by their speaking but by their hearing—at least hearing him fully out, after which, as if he expected neither justice nor humanity at their hands, he tells them to "mock on." My complaint is to God and not to men—and yet had it been so, I should have had reason to find fault with the hard treatment I have received from them. You should look on in silent amazement at the mysterious visitations which have come upon me, and not have construed them to my condemnation, and the embittering of my spirit by your cruel insinuations. For myself, when I think of God, I stand in deep awe of Him and of His incomprehensible judgment—seeing that his dealings with men are so dark and enigmatical, whether it be in the way of prospering and upholding the wicked, or in the way of sorely afflicting the righteous.—And this brings him into collision with the argument of these his friends, or rather enemies. For if the interpretation to be put on mine adversity is that I have sinned, how comes it that the wicked often speed so well in the world? The rod of God is not upon them because of their iniquities—nay, fortune and felicity not only smile upon them till death, but abide with their families throughout succeeding generations. Their life is prosperous, and their death easy—passing by sudden transition from a world where they have thriven both in their estates and their households.

14-21.—It is this continued prosperity which ministers to and upholds their ungodliness through life. It is because there are no changes that they fear not God. But

they are not the authors of their own good. This is not in their hands; and, therefore, let this counsel of the wicked depart far from me. And though I have said that often do the wicked prosper, yet often also it is otherwise —so that we can found no confident interpretation on present appearances, though the future consummation of their lot is destruction to the ungodly. It may often be deferred, but their judgment at length cometh—certainly upon themselves in the next life, and even often upon themselves, too, in the present world, or upon their posterity after them. There is here the peculiar administration of children suffering from the sins of their parents, which these parents shall know of—even though it might be by the channel of a knowledge that flows from the world here to the state into which they have departed; and even though the children should prosper, of what avail is it to the parent, if, carried off early and suddenly, he be removed by death from the enjoyment of his house's prosperity.

22-34.—On the whole, he pronounces man to be incompetent for judging of the Almighty on the phenomena before our eyes. We cannot eliminate from these the principle on which He governs the world. To our gross and outward observation, adversity and prosperity seem to be scattered abroad indiscriminately, so as to light where they may. This made it all the more perverse and offensive in the friends of Job to construe, as they did, the misery which had befallen him into his wickedness. It is for this he reproaches them—identifying the fall of his house and estate, who was, indeed, a prince among them, with the retribution due to an oppressor or a tyrant. He rebukes the misinterpretation, and gives the true

solution of it, that there is a day of wrath and judgment coming—a pretty clear intimation of his faith in a future state. Before that day comes there may not be power in any man here to inflict or declare a just sentence on him who prospers in an evil way: we do not even see the punishment of such in their death—for the quietness of the grave also is alike to all—your argument, therefore, against me is vain, and if intended for comfort through the hope that if righteous I shall be still happy in this world, it is based on a principle which, as false, ought to be rejected.

JOB XXII. 1-11.—The exasperation of Job's friends seems to be now at its heat; and he is impeached by the bitter and unjust Eliphaz, in terms far more direct and personal and vituperative than before. His ostensible plea is zeal for the vindication of God's ways. God, says he, is far too independent of man to be benefited by his righteousness, or to restrain and punish because He is afraid of him. He gives no account to man of His doings, but proceeds in the administration of His government on the absolute and unchangeable principles of His own equity—and therefore it is, says Eliphaz, that he now executes vengeance upon thee. It is no longer in the terms of a general proposition, but of a specific charge, that he now assails the afflicted patriarch—preferring against him an indictment of many counts, as the oppressor of the poor, and patron only of the wealthy and honourable. And on these accounts, he alleges, it is that God hath so beset his way, and laid upon him a sore and sudden visitation. Hence it is that the darkness of adversity is round about him, and that the waters of affliction so overwhelm him.

12-20.—Eliphaz continues his reproof of Job, and here charges him with the practical atheism of regarding God as one whose place is aloft, and so removed from the concerns of earth that He sees them not, or, at least, casts no regard upon them. But in reply to that, he alleges of Job as if he looked upon God not only as walking on the circuit of heaven, but as circumscribed thereby—he bids the patriarch consider the fate of wicked men, who after their transient prosperity had lasted for a space, were at length cast down untimeously.... The "flood" may be a term of generality, descriptive of any adverse and overwhelming visitation, though it is possible that the Deluge may in this place be referred to.... They, as all other wicked men in their prosperity, feel independent of God, as if He did nothing for them, though in fact it be He who fills them with all the good things which they enjoy. There seems a counterpart at this place to what Job had said in ch. xxi. 14-16—either as if he (Eliphaz) had on better premises come to the same conclusion with Job, or as if charging Job with a false disclaimer of the counsel that himself shared in. Then does Eliphaz express the satisfaction which the righteous had in witnessing God's just dealings with His adversaries, and the vindication of His sovereignty against them, but insidiously contrasts his own state and that of his friends with poor Job's, in that their substance had not been cut down, while his had been consumed.

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21-30.—After having discharged his wrath upon Job, does Eliphaz proceed to advise him, as if his case were not altogether hopeless; but that the way of repentance and restoration to Divine favour still lay open to him. It

is a truly precious admonition for all to "acquaint" themselves with God; and O if we but knew Him aright, we should find the fruit of that acquaintance to be peace. There is a fulness of comfort in this. And after our reconciliation, we have a law to receive and to follow.—May that law be in my heart—even the law of holiness, that in the end there may be life everlasting.... The view of Eliphaz, however, is confined to temporalities, as the great manifestation of God's returning favour. If thou return, thou shalt be built up both in righteousness and prosperity. The commencement will be followed by an increase. Thou wilt not only remove iniquity, but put it far away from thee; and with every addition to thy goodness there will be an enlargement of wealth. And thy word shall become law, thy will be accomplished.... Job in the two last verses may be conceived of as decreeing upon his authority the deliverance of the humble, and of those who dwell in the habitations of the innocent; or as praying to God for them, when, on the ground that the fervent and effectual prayer of a righteous man availeth much, it will be found that according to the faith of his petition so shall it be done for them.

Job xxiii.—Eliphaz had ceased from personally reproaching Job at the end of his speech; and Job, in his answer, takes no notice of him, but moralizes on the ways of God. He bewails his state, yet has the confidence to think that if he could find God he could state his case and prevail. His aspiration after God is a very fine and expressive breathing of the soul. He has evidently not let go his trust—conscious, and I think warrantably so, that mainly he was right with God, and that God would

do him justice at last. Meanwhile he is in great darkness; and as if aware that he was now under probation, he looks forward to the issue of it for his own triumphant vindication. He is sustained in this hope by the testimony of a good conscience—bearing witness to the adherence of his life, and the esteem of his heart, for the law and the words of God. Still he speaks of God's present dealings with him as inexplicable; and defers to His power, if not to His justice, which for the time at least he does not perceive or understand. And he speaks of this enigmatical policy of God as usual—" for many such things are with Him." Under the existing pressure he is nervously and sensitively afraid; nor does his general confidence that all will be right at last, keep him from verging on a complaint against the Almighty that He had not before cut him off.

Job xxiv. 1-11.—They who may be said to know God, do not on that account know all that He knoweth. In particular, there is much respecting His judgments and the methods of His administration which are enigmatical in the eyes even of His chosen ones, and will remain so till the mystery of God is finished. As one proof or illustration of this, the wicked are suffered often and long to go on in their ways with impunity—ways of violence and oppression and bloodshed.... There are incidental touches of description which let us into the life and economy of the Arabians and other children of the wilderness, or the marauders of a region where law and property had not taken up their firm abode and settlement. And so we have the seizure of land, and the robbery of cattle and goods, and such ferocity as compels the helpless to flee

and hide themselves. These buccaneers look on the world before them as a common—as much as do the wild animals who have no sense of property; they wickedly reap the corn, and gather up the vintage which do not belong to them; they cruelly dispossess the owners thereof, and turn them adrift to the weather and upon the wilderness; they are men-stealers also, either taking infants as hostages, or to bring them up as slaves—who have to toil at their harvests and wine-presses, and yet obtain not in return the necessary sustenance.

12-25.—Both in town and country are the people oppressed by these men of violence—yet God does not, immediately at least, reckon with them for their wickedness, sometimes called folly.... To "rebel against the light" may be to sin against conscience, but taken along with the illustrations here given, it may signify to regard light as an enemy, and count the darkness as their opportunity for doing evil—either so early as to avoid the exposure of the full risen day, or in the concealments of midnight, and so they prosecute their murders and adulteries and thefts. When discovered, they, under terror, make off to desolate and accursed places, away from the haunts or occupations of men—yet often do they remain at ease till their death; when of course they will be forgotten by relatives, and broken—or perish like a shivered or decayed tree. Their wickedness is described further in verses 21, 22, as breaking forth into injury and neglect of the childless and widow, as also into successful violence against the mighty. There is a respite given to them of safety; and this lulls them into a deceitful confidence, but only for a little, when they are brought down, as all men at length are, even as the ears of corn are brought

down from their present eminence. And if it be not so now, if they are not cut off now from their state of loftiness and prosperity, as they certainly will be at death—who can thence infer the falsehood or vanity of my argument, grounded as it is on the principle that there may be prosperity for a time to the wicked, as there is adversity to the righteous?

JOB XXV.—This is the last speech in reply to Job by any of his three friends; and it is certainly replete with good sentiment and sound general principle. There is no direct charge in it against Job himself; but it throughout implies a rebuke for having justified himself before God. Its few sentences are replete with pure and lofty Theism. ... The peace which He is said to make in His high place, may signify the perfect order and tranquillity and acquiescence which reign in Heaven, where all is reverential submission to His authority; and whence the rebellious have been expelled by the thunder of His power. There might be here an intended contrast to the state of earth, where so many, and as his friends would insinuate, where Job among the number, murmur against God. As if to control this turbulence, Bildad alleges the extent and the might of His dominion; and in saying—"upon whom doth not His light arise?" he would seem to intimate the perfect vision of God, and cognizance that He takes of all things. This gives a relevancy to the question which succeeds—"How then can man be justified with God?" He who looketh upon beings and objects celestial, and can discern what is impure or imperfect there—how much more must he find out the pollution of such earth-born creatures as we?

Job xxvi.—Job, as if he felt the force of a hostile insinuation in what Bildad had said, utters his last and lengthened reply, in his wonted tone of complaint and remonstrance and vindication. He first accuses Bildad of want of generosity in bearing down, as he did, on a helpless and afflicted person, such as himself, and then of want of wisdom. He neither knew the case of him whom he was addressing, nor of what spirit he himself was. Job then himself undertakes the high theme of God and of His ways, and comes forth with a most impressive description of that Almighty Being whose path is in the deep waters, and the might and mystery of whose works and whose counsels none can comprehend. He alone can penetrate the abyss below, while the wonders of Nature, to man inexplicable, demonstrate a wisdom and a power to us unsearchable. The consideration of God's unsearchable knowledge may well humble and cast down the lofty imagination of proud and aspiring mortals here below.... The "serpent" may be a constellation of those heavens which His hand hath garnished. Some have carried their thoughts from this place to the serpent of Eden, and hence to the origin of evil, as a further aggravation of the mysteriousness of God and the ignorance of man.... There is a sound and deep Christian philosophy that may be grounded on the last verse—on the confinement of man's knowledge to the parts only of God's ways, the lower extremities, as it were, of His administration, those forthgoings of it which come down to earth, and are visible there, while the springs and principles, and anterior steps, of His varied process, are above and out of sight. We hear "the thunder of His power," or powerful thunder; but who can understand the nature of it? The phenomena

of this lower world are patent to our senses; but who can venture to assign the causes or the purposes of God's methods in creation?

JOB XXVII. 1-10.—A grave and weighty instruction, with or without figures, may be termed a parable. He makes a solemn appeal to God, yet speaks of Him in a rash and unseemly manner, as having taken away or withheld justice from him, when He had only hidden it from his view. It is a hasty utterance;—and yet there was, we think, a well-warranted consciousness of his own integrity, when he announced his immovable adherence to truth and principle, and his confidence that this would abide with him to the end of his days. He could call God to witness that he lied not—even as Paul did. (Rom. ix. 1.) He refused, therefore, to justify his friends in their accusation of him as a hypocrite. He knew himself to be otherwise—his conscience testifying to the integrity that he was determined to hold fast. So little was he in love with wickedness or hypocrisy, that he wants them to be ever at the farthest distance from himself, and transferred both in their character and portion to those who were most opposed to him. Neither will God hear the cry of the hypocrite when trouble cometh, nor in his prosperity will the hypocrite call upon or delight himself in God.—Let such a habit and such a consummation be far removed from me. The prosperity of a whole life will be of no avail, when death and destruction come upon the wicked as doth a whirlwind.

11-23.—Job proceeds to lesson his friends into another view of God and of his ways than that on which they themselves had reasoned. He appeals to their own observation,

and speaks of their arguments as opposite to what they had ever seen with their own eyes—viz., that wicked men might have their seasons of fair and flourishing prosperity; but that all at length will pass away—their families broken up, their wealth scattered to the winds. We are not therefore to infer the character from the present condition of any, but to wait the final issue of things.... The circumstance of widows weeping not marks strongly, not the death alone of oppressors, but the detestation in which they were held. That the rich shall lie down and not be gathered, we are inclined to view, not as some do in the light of an ordinary sleep, but of the sleep of death—so that the not being gathered may signify his not being buried, not being gathered to his fathers—perhaps not being gathered into the garner at the resurrection of the blessed. Or if the latter be not admitted, we have here the strong description of men dying unwept and unburied—in keeping with the contempt and hatred wherewith they are here said to be driven from society.

JOB XXVIII. 1-11.—We have here a striking representation of man's wisdom in things material, as contrasted with his destitution and deficiency in the moral and spiritual, which is the true wisdom. Geologists in pursuit of knowledge, or capitalists in pursuit of wealth, can dig and search for the hidden things that are in the bowels of the earth. Man can unveil the secrets of the deep, and make a perfect ascertainment of what is laid up there.... There has been a world of diversity respecting the fourth verse; some referring it to the melted metal under process of extraction from its ore—others to the subterranean waters which have sunk away from the surface of the earth

—no longer wet by their presence—and are withdrawn from the feet of men. The vegetable produce of the earth above, is in singular contrast with its fiery and metallic character below. The unseen profundities, which no others have entered upon or looked at, have been explored by men who have found their way underneath; and, to make it good, have penetrated into mountains, and raised barriers of defence against the streams which flow under ground, and cut their path through the solid rock to those recesses where lie embedded the precious things which they are in quest of. Perhaps "the flood breaking out from the inhabitant" in verse 4, may signify that subsidence of water from the surface to the lower parts of the earth which withdraws it from the use of man, and gives rise to the floods which are under ground, and are apt to overflow upon the miners.

12-28.—But where, Job proceeds to ask, is true wisdom? Not in the places before enumerated, and so laboriously opened up by human skill. All the treasures found in the bowels of the earth cannot purchase it: it must be looked for in some other quarter than anywhere in the material universe. Neither is this wisdom to be found in the land of the living, or among men as they exist in society, from whose eyes it is hidden; and seeing that men are wiser than the inferior animals, it is to be found nowhere throughout the varieties of animated nature on the face of our globe. It comes from a higher source. Destruction and death have only heard the fame of this wisdom—they border upon its territory—they conduct us through the dark passage to that place where we shall know even as we are known; and where in God's light we shall clearly see light. Meanwhile He reveals to us even

here some parts of His ways: through His word and by His Spirit, eternal and spiritual truth is in a certain degree made known to us. And there is one great lesson, on which if we proceed, we shall be guided onward to the perfect day—a lesson that signalizes the wisdom of the moral and the spiritual, as contradistinguished from that of the material—that wisdom of which the fear of God is the principle, and the departure from evil its effect and pathway.

JOB XXIX. 1-10.—He then recurs to his own state, and looks back with longing and wishful regret to the days of that high and bright prosperity from which he had fallen. He refers it all to God, as the author and upholder thereof. It was His light that shone upon him, and by which he walked through darkness. The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him, (Ps. xxv. 14,) and this was upon Job's tabernacle. God shewed him that in His covenant, which is hidden from the men of the world, and revealed unto the children of light.... There are some fine touches of pathos in this retrospective description of what he was when his children were about him, and he was surrounded by the homage and respect of all who knew him. The exuberance of his wealth is expressed under the figure of "the rock pouring out rivers of oil." In Syria and Arabia, the olive abounds in rocky places. One of God's blessings on Jacob was, that "He made him suck honey out of the rock, and oil out of the flinty rock."... We have here a most eloquent representation of the universal esteem in which Job was held—of the awe which his presence inspired among the young, and the reverence that was called forth from the aged. The mention of the princes and the nobles,

who testified their sense of his superiority, bring before us a state of society in which there obtained an aristocracy and gradation of ranks.

11-25.—And it was not his wealth alone which procured for him all this consideration; his goodness, as much or more than his greatness, had to do with it. He was the object of a general and grateful benediction, because of his kindness to the poor, and those who were ready to perish. There was a moral reverence awarded to him, and not for his humanity alone, but also for his justice:—he sat on the seat of judgment, where he searched out the cause that was brought before him, and redressed the wrongs of the injured, and brought the proud oppressor low. No wonder that he was flattered by all these ensigns of stability and honour into a sense of security, as if his mountain stood strong and he should never be moved. It was with the Psalmist as with the Patriarch, (Ps. xxx. 6, 7;) and the experience of both was alike, in that when God hid His face they were troubled. In the days of his affluence and high reputation, it was not his worth only, but his wisdom that drew upon him the general confidence and respect of the community:—men kept silence at his counsel, and after his words spake not again. And he not only spoke to them with the weight of an adviser, but with the authority of a king. He chose out their way, and sat amongst them as a chief among his subjects—"and the light of his countenance they cast not down." It was not undervalued as the familiarity is which breeds contempt; but his notice and smile conferred a felt distinction on those to whom he gave them. Altogether, he presents us with a striking picture of the elevation and glory to which God had raised him.

Job xxx. 1-11.—Then comes the miserable contrast of his present degradation and distress. One can well fancy his indignation against those who now insulted over him; and it seems to be in this spirit that he speaks against those who thus derided him, yet "whose fathers he would have disdained to set with the dogs of his flock." The recollection and the reflection are alike most natural:—they were of no use to me, could render me no service—they had not even the strength of old men in them, so utterly powerless were they from the exhaustion of hunger and extreme want. He here draws a graphical representation of these outcasts of the wilderness prowling for their food, and reduced to grovel and live as they best may on the roots of the earth, and to hide or shelter themselves among its cliffs and cavities. We can figure the condition of these unfriended wanderers, exiled it is likely from society by their vices, and compelled to take refuge among the fastnesses of the desert. Yet these are the men who could now heap their indignities on the afflicted and venerable patriarch. Because God had loosed his cord of authority over them, they had loosed the bridle which formerly held and constrained them to reverence Job, and gave the rein to all sorts of outrage and insolence against him.

12-20.—The pushing away of his feet as he sat on the ground, as if to make way for themselves, is as unfeeling and contemptuous a freedom with the poor mourner as can well be imagined. The "raising up against him the ways of their destruction," may mean the plying of him with all their methods of hostility against those whom they want to destroy—they so mar his path as to defeat all his purposes—they promote and further his calamity; and either they are so strong against me and my impo-

tency, that they require no helper; or, as some would read, I have no helper against them. Then there is no misunderstanding the violence and terror of their assaults —so that he is driven before them like a cloud before the wind: and hence his internal agony, both through the day and through the night. It seems as if it had broken out into a perspiration which soiled his garment, and made it stick close about him—so as to cover him with the loathsomeness of the wet mire. After turning his view from outward upon his enemies to inward upon himself, he thence turns it upward to God, whom he regards as the real and efficient author of all this distress; and of whom he complains that He regardeth not his cry.

21-31.—He continues his address to God, and in a tone of reflection that seems not at all justifiable. It is a fault in which he is overtaken by the recurrence of extreme suffering—not the fault of one who sinneth wilfully, and so as to evince that the root of the matter is not in him. He calls God cruel, and complains of the process by which he will be conducted onward to death—the common lot of humanity; but to which others are brought in a way far less painful than he is made to undergo. In verse 24, he seems to comfort himself that in the grave he will not have the hand of God stretched out against him—perhaps on the idea of death bringing to him undisturbed rest; and perhaps in the faith of the future blessedness reserved for him in heaven, though other men who have no such hope cry out in the agonies of their mortal dissolution. Again, he seems to ask how he came to deserve all this severity? He appeals to his past life, and speaks of his humanity to the poor—notwithstanding which, he complains that, though he had reason to look for a blessing,

evil came upon him.—Then follows a most piteous and pathetic description of his sufferings. There is much of the graphical, and much also of the poetic, in these representations of the afflicted patriarch.... The harp hung upon the willow-trees, and which gives such picturesque effect to the sufferings of the Jewish captives in Babylon, is here employed in setting forth the condition of Job.

JOB XXXI. 1-12.—He proceeds in the work of vindication. He had before alleged his humanity—he now alleges his chastity, and that in a high and pure style, or to the length of making a covenant with his eyes, and so as to shun the provocatives to unhallowed desire.—Let us lay a control upon our looks, and this will exert a wholesome influence upon our thoughts. Let not ours be the eyes that cannot cease from sin. What other portion or inheritance awaits it, but punishment even unto destruction?—Job protests his innocence in this matter. He appeals to God, and imprecates a vengeance upon himself—if he have ever walked in the ways of that vanity, from which he habitually turned his eyes, or if he have given way to deceitful lusts, or if he have walked after the desire of his eyes, or incurred the guilt whether of covetousness or rapacity. The two sins of incontinency and avarice seem blended together, as in other parts of Scripture; but the evils of licentiousness, and God's displeasure against it, are most prominently brought out in this passage.

13-23.—Job farther alleges of himself his kind and equitable consideration of the poor; and how that when even opposed to himself on any question of justice, he bestowed all merciful and righteous attention upon their cause. He affirms the sound principle upon this subject—

the equality of rights between men, and our responsibility to God if we trample upon these in the case of the weak and the helpless. And he alleges more than his uprightness as a judge—he was more than just, he was generous: he bore a special regard to the necessities of the poor man and of the widow—he imparted to them of his own abundance, and this he was in the habit of doing from his youth, even from infancy. The compassionate feelings of his nature grew up with him—insomuch, that beginning at early boyhood, I guided her (the widow) and protected her; and the poor also were cared for by me, as if I were their father. If I have failed, or fallen short in these things—if I have acted the part of an oppressor, and not been the benefactor of the destitute, let the worst calamities befall me. I always held by the fear of God; and I could not endure that He, the avenger of the wretched, should become my enemy. He did not oppress, even though he could with impunity from men who in the days of his prosperity and power were ready to bring him off, even though in violation of right judgment. He had their help in the gate, or at the seat of judgment; but he had respect to the invisible Judge above.

24-28.—He carries his disclaimer still farther, from the sins of the hand to those of the heart. He disclaims having given way to the idolatry of the affections, and blends together in this disclaimer the spiritual with the literal idolatry. It marks an enlightened morality—a high advancement in the spiritual or celestial ethics, that he should thus denounce with the same breath a confidence in wealth, and homage to the heavenly bodies as objects of worship. It is well to behold so early a testimony to so high a standard. The abominations of creature worship

in the form of material idolatry, were quite palpable; but it argues a higher reach of principle, when the love of the creature more than the Creator is pronounced upon as a sin of the same category with a sensible act of worship to the creature, to the degradation and dishonour of the great Creator. This dawning of an enlightened morality in so ancient a writer, is as interesting as the dawning of that enlightened faith in virtue of which he saw afar off—even to the doctrine of a redemption from sin and a resurrection from the grave.—Elevate my affections, O God, from the things which are beneath to those which are above. Let me cease from trusting in deceitful riches.—Be Thou the strength of my heart, and my portion for evermore.

29-40.—There is also here another high point of morality—if not the love of enemies, at least the grace of forbearance, along with the absence of all revengeful feelings, as well as of all revengeful deeds against them. He not only did not pronounce, but did not wish a curse on the soul of his adversary—and this even though urged to it by the members of his own household, who were fain for the revenge which Job forbore to inflict. But with all his care he may have fallen into sin; and therefore he protests that when this at any time occurred he did not conceal or palliate, as *man* is naturally inclined to do. Some understand it to be—as Adam made excuses for himself in the garden; but the absence of the definite article in the Hebrew rather forbids this. He further alleges his hospitality—his fearlessness when called abroad to duty, though in the face of hostility and contempt; and on these grounds he challenges his adversary to write his specifications, nay, even wishes that God would step forward, so that He may order his cause before Him. He

concludes with the disclaimer of all tyranny and injustice in his own neighbourhood; and then pronounces his last imprecation.—Mark the variety of these in verses 8, 10, 22, and 40. And thus ends the colloquy of Job with his three friends.

JOB XXXII. 1-11.—There now comes upon the stage another interlocutor—the three former speakers now ceasing to make any further reply. Elihu, a younger man than any of the former debaters, was dissatisfied with the state to which they had brought the argument. He was displeased with both parties—with Job for his complaints against God, and with the three friends for their imperfect vindication of the dealings of the Most High with Job; and perhaps, too, with the style of their condemnation against him. He had observed hitherto the modesty which became a junior; but when the former speakers gave up the cause and remained silent, then he broke through his former restraints, and with all the apparent energy of one who had just forced his way through the obstacle by which he had hitherto been held—the fire burnt within him, and he could contain no longer. The spirit which God had given him was too strong for confinement any longer; and therefore with many apologies, and a good deal of what might be called preliminary and apologetic phrasing, he proceeds to give forth his opinion.

12-22.—Elihu makes all previous obeisance to the claims of seniority ere he enters upon his part of the controversy. And he intimates that there was a peculiar wisdom which the right treatment of the question called for—such a wisdom as Job's friends had not evinced throughout their argument; and the peculiarity lies in

this, that the overthrow of Job was properly God's doing and not man's—though men were so far the instruments thereof. This made it a more transcendental question than otherwise, and placed it more above the sphere of ordinary reasoning. Elihu further states earnestly, that he was free of a darkening or resentful influence which the friends lay under—between whom and Job much anger had been stirred up—whereas Elihu was free of all perverting influence from this quarter, as Job had not directed any quarrelsome words against him, nor was he under the temptation of directing like words back again. And then he adverts to the confusion and consequent silence of those who had undertaken, but failed to vindicate the ways of God. He felt that justice had not been done to the cause of God;—a zeal for his honour seems the animating principle that set him forward; and under the force as it were of an irrepressible tendency, he felt himself urged to declare himself without fear and without flattery. It is in deference to God, and under the awe of his judgments, that he professes his determination to abstain from the flattery of men.

Job xxxiii. 1-7.—There is much still of the prefatory in Elihu's speech, even after he had turned and addressed himself particularly to Job. He professes his uprightness, though perhaps he assumes too much when he promises a clear exposition of the case—as if it had been reserved for him to express himself with a reason and a perspicuity in which the former speakers had failed. It is not very distinct whether he lays claim to a special inspiration in verse 4—but the expression would rather lead one to understand that all which he pretended to was his creation

by God, and that he had received life from His hand. He speaks of himself, however, as being in God's stead, and on that seems to challenge attention, and to call for a reply. But he also, at the same time, reminds Job that he was but a fellow-mortal; and that under a sense of this, he should be the last man to insult over him, as had done his friends, neither would he employ any of that menace or violence of which Job had complained against those who were around him. He was obviously under a strong internal impulse to speak; but it does not yet appear that it was an inspiration from God which constrained him to do so.

8-22.—He first accuses Job, because he had made too strong an assertion of his own innocency: he had almost spoken of himself as a man that had no sin. He next accuses him for his charges and complaints against God. The reply is in the spirit of true religious wisdom and philosophy. God is not amenable to the creatures of his hand: He giveth no account of his matters: He is so much greater and higher than we as to be above our comprehension. It is vain for man to strive with his Maker—"Who art thou, O man, that repliest against God?" Man is often afflicted because of his disobedience to God and heedlessness of His will. God speaks often to men both in His words and by His providence—yet man strangely abides insensible to the lesson. He speaks for the purpose of withdrawing man from the counsel of his own heart and the sight of his own eyes, and we may add, the vanity of his own proud and lofty imaginations. And it is thus with all who hear Him, and whose souls do consequently live, that they are kept from perishing. This instruction He brings home to them in various ways—it may

be in vision, or by putting man upon his meditations, whether on the book of revelation or on the book of experience; or, He speaks to man by chastisements, so that he is brought near to death;—but this not for his destruction, as the friends of Job seemed to intimate, and accordingly spake of him as of a man that was doomed; but for his recallment to spiritual health, if Job would but make this use of the wholesome though bitter draught, and not arraign God because of it.

23-33.—For great as the extremity may be, it is recoverable—not by the instrumentality of such speakers as Job's friends were, but by a wise instructor, shewing to him not only the uprightness of God but what his own uprightness would be—what would be right for him in his circumstances of affliction. Should the patient under discipline betake himself to this way, there is acceptance with God through that great propitiation which is here most significantly and strikingly glanced upon, even at this early period of the world. And as temporal blessings seem to have been more palpably administered in these days in the shape of rewards, there will, it is here said, on this return unto God be experienced a return to bodily health, as well as the peace and joy of a felt reconciliation, and righteousness will be imputed to him. Let man but acknowledge his perversities and renounce them, and God will again draw him back from the margin of that pit into which he was on the eve of descending. This is God's way of working with man; and would Job but understand and proceed on it, all might yet be well with him. Having opened his argument, Elihu craves from Job his further attention, and assures him of his friendly designs towards him. He seems here, also, to

ask for a reply, which upon not receiving, he continues his speech.

JOB XXXIV. 1-9.—In the opening invocation of this chapter the remarkable expression of "the ear trying words" indicates a something in the words themselves, which recommends them to acceptance—and that upon their own goodness, or inherent worth and evidence alone, just as the mouth has an immediate relish for the savoury meat which is presented to it. It is thus that we should discriminate, by an innate judgment, the good from the evil. On the strength of these principles he appeals to the wise men whom he is addressing—if Job had spoken rightly in reproaching God for having wronged him, and in keeping so determinedly by the plea of his own innocency? He was wrong in saying that his wound was incurable—it might, for aught he knew, have been a temporary chastisement; and he was farther wrong in saying that it was without transgression, or that there was nothing in himself which called for chastisement. He on this most seriously charges Job with having given countenance by his reflections to the infidelity of the scorners and enemies of God. It was tantamount to saying that it made no difference whether a man was obedient or not—that it profited a man nothing though he should delight in God.

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10-20.—Elihu then refers the charge which he pronounced against Job to the wise among the by-standers. He proceeds, in their hearing, to the direct assertion of God's entire righteousness, and affirms of Him that He will not lay upon man any infliction beyond the deservings,

but only for the good of him who is visited therewith. God will not do what is unrighteous; and to speak otherwise is both to arraign the eternal rectitude of His nature, and to make presumptuous invasion on the rightfulness of His sovereignty. Elihu stands up both for the character and the prerogatives of God—saying not only that He will not do wickedly, but that to Him belongs inherently, and without gift from another, the charge of the whole earth, and absolute disposal of the world that He has created; and if He set His heart on man, address Himself to the work of strictly and intimately scrutinizing him—(Ps. cxxx. 3; cxliii. 2)—if He assemble all the living, that their lives be disposed of according to their deservings, all flesh would perish. But why thus arraign God? Would a hater of justice have the Supreme Power? In condemning Him thou condemnest not only the greatest but the best of all beings.—Is it fit that this should be done? It were even a bold thing to allege this against earthly potentates; and how bad as well as bold to allege it against Him who is above all principality, and who demonstrates His impartiality by His equal dealings with all of every rank; for all are the work of His hands. The sentence of death passes on all alike, and often with a midnight suddenness and unpreparedness which casts terror among the families of the mightiest as well as the poorest in the land—and this often without instrumentality—by the silent power of God.

21-37.—His omniscience is here adverted to as well as His equity. Nothing can screen the wicked from His observation. And with all His power and perfection of knowledge, He will not lay on man more than is right—so that when He destroys some, and sets up others, we

may be sure that all is done with unerring judgment—and this often in the open sight of others. He hears the cry of the opprest, and He avenges the oppression, whether on nations or persons—and this lest hypocrisy and wickedness should lord it over the earth. And then, if God be against them, who can be effectually for them?—in like manner as, if God be for, who can be against them? At times, too, it may not be palpable what the sins are for which God sends His chastisements. Nevertheless, we should be sure that He, the Judge of all the earth, is ever doing what is right; and therefore it is not meet that we should accuse God, but bear what He pleases to lay on—pray for light—and purpose repentance. Is it to be thy mind or God's mind that is to regulate thy lot? He will take His own way. It is not I, it is not man, that lays all this upon thee;—learn to submit in silence; and if thou wilt speak, speak what thou knowest. I appeal to men of understanding, whether Job hath spoken according to knowledge and wisdom? Let him be fully tried, and let him not speak so as to furnish arguments for the wicked: he adds contumacy to sin by thus multiplying his words against God. The practical advice given to Job in verses 31 and 32, seems admirably suited to his case, and implies a right discernment of it.

JOB XXXV.—Elihu now speaks more personally and directly to Job. He bids him think that God owes not to him because of his righteousness, in the way that one man owes another because of a benefit received—neither does He resent our sin in the way that man retaliates the injury done to him by his fellow. God's administration is conducted on higher principles. Job had accused

God for not righting the oppressed; but this is because they do not own God:—they cry not to Him, but to—and perhaps against—their oppressors, who, in their pride and wickedness, will give them no redress. But would they look higher than to the visible instruments of their distress; would they go direct to God, who will not hear their vain resentments against others—He will hear their supplications to himself. Thou hast said that you do not perceive the meaning or the equity of His dealings; He is a God of equity notwithstanding, and it is your duty to trust Him. It is because you do not trust that He is angry, and has visited you accordingly; yet he correcteth in measure. He knoweth not anger after the chastisement has fulfilled its end. But Job hath perverted the dispensation, in that instead of acquiescing, he hath spoken unadvisedly and resentfully against it.

Job xxxvi. 1-10.—Elihu persists in the affirmation of God's righteousness. He speaks of himself as perfect in knowledge—confident, at least, of the soundness of his views on the question between God and him with whom he is now holding converse. He professes, too, to fetch this knowledge as from the high and first principles of an exalted subject. He further speaks of God as mighty, yet despising not: though high He has respect unto the lowly. More particularly does He concern himself with the affairs of this lower world, and proceed according to the rules of a pure distributive justice with all who live in it. He punishes the wicked, and withholdeth not their rights from the poor. He bears a special respect unto the righteous, and exalts them to preferment and honour. But what is peculiarly applicable to Job's case—even them He

exercises and disciplines with afflictions for their good. It is for their instruction, and humiliation, and repentance, and that the trial or chastisement which He has laid on might yield unto them the peaceable fruit of righteousness.

11-21.—The final result of this their visitation will be according to their deportment under it—a temporary distress, and return to prosperity, if they return to their obedience; and utter destruction if they do not. This last will be the fate of the hypocrites, who will die without the knowledge which is life everlasting—die, because not knowing the lesson of God's dealings, they will heap up "wrath against the day of wrath." (Rom. ii. 4, 5.) They cry not with a true godly sorrow when He lays adversity upon them. They harden their hearts, and persist in their uncleanness.—My God, let me take the corrections which Thou hast often laid upon my waywardness, and improve them.—But He delivereth the poor, and openeth their ears, both to comfort and admonition, so that they make a wise application of His providential lesson to them; and so would He have done to Job—hadst thou comported thyself aright under this dispensation. But thou hast flung at it like a bullock not accustomed to the yoke; and therefore the hand of God's justice is still upon thee. Have a care lest He who is angry because of thy waywardness, do not destroy thee outright. When His final determination is taken, nothing will, nothing can avert it. Thou hast perversely sought for death—but there, too, in the place where they lie, God will find them out, and follow them to their everlasting doom. Take heed therefore:—thou hast committed the iniquity of a presumptuous and false charge against God—

and hast chosen to do this rather than acquiesce in your affliction. Amend in time.

22-33.—He then rises to the direct contemplation of God, and alleges His power, His wisdom, and knowledge; His unimpeachable righteousness, the greatness of His works visible to all, His unsearchableness, and last, His eternity—as so many arguments for the modesty and submission of us His creatures. He then enters more into detail on His marvellous handiwork, as seen in the mysterious processes of Nature. His instances here are taken from the atmosphere, from the secrets of meteorology, in which, notwithstanding the discoveries of modern science, there are depths and recesses to us still unfathomable. The things particularly mentioned in this passage are the formation of rain from vapour, the functions of clouds, their distribution and support in the higher regions of the air; the thunder—if I understand aright the "noise of His tabernacle;" the lightning—or rather, perhaps, the light which He diffuses among the clouds, and spreads over the face of the sea. It is by these that, in the shape of storms, He at one time sends forth judgments over the world; and by these also that at another time He fertilizes the earth, and causeth it to bring forth food abundantly. There are noises in the air, and appearances among the cattle, which often indicate changes of weather.

JOB XXXVII. 1-13.—He proceeds to expatiate on God's wonderful works—a contemplation, this, whence we may derive many arguments for silence and submission to Him under all His dispensations. It is for man to stand in awe, and speak not again. His first reference is to the thunder preceded by the lightning, after which the

voice of God is heard; and He will not stay the consequences of such a visitation, which may be regarded as the biddings of this voice. It will have full scope, and fulfil all for which it has been sent—the rain in sweeping torrents, the usual products of thunder. His doings are alike great and incomprehensible—and so unite the two chief properties of the marvellous; and this should restrain our hasty condemnation of His ways. The secrets of meteorology are His—the snow and the dew, and the various deposits of the atmosphere.... The seventh verse is variously interpreted. Perhaps it means that by the same tempests from the sky which shut up the wild beasts in their dens, does He suspend the works of man—these superseded and set aside by the operations of the Almighty above, that man might recognise His power and supremacy. Storms might come occasionally from the south, and cold generally from the north. Then there is the frost, which straightens or binds up the waters—a rarer, and therefore a more marvellous phenomenon in these parts. The thick or dark cloud is exhausted by raining—whereas the thin and light clouds, which yield no rain, are dispersed. He guideth these messengers of the sky at His pleasure—whether for judgment or for a blessing upon the land.

14-24.—On these premises He appeals to Job, bidding him be still, and consider such wondrous works of God. He wants to convince him how far God is above his knowledge or understanding; and for this he enumerates various of Nature's mysteries—and chiefly the doings of God in the atmosphere above us. We know neither the *when* nor the *how*. We cannot foretell the manifold evolutions of nature, which were all long ere now foreordained

by God—neither do we understand the cause, whether of the lightning or the rainbow—nor the manner in which the clouds are sustained and poised in the air—nor the causes of the ever-varying temperature, nor the optical phenomenon of the blue vault over our heads. We are in darkness, but He is perfect in knowledge. Should man attempt to speak of God, He will either chastise his presumption, or the man will lose himself among depths which he cannot fathom.—Elihu concludes with a few striking instances of what may be termed the "deep things of God." First in the physical world—as the dispersion of the clouds by the wind, and often out of the north, disclosing the bright light of the sun, which had been hidden in or among or behind them. These evince the power and majesty of God; but He excels in moral attributes; and we may be assured that these are perfect, though we cannot find out the reason of His darker dispensations; yet He afflicts not willingly, and will cause joy to come in the morning after a season of tears—just as He causes fair weather to come after the tempest. Men should therefore stand aloof from the presumption of making charges upon God. He will not falter from the counsels of His own wisdom in compliance with that wisdom of man which to Him is foolishness.

Job xxxviii. 1-7.—At length God appears, and asserts His own cause. The charge implied in verse 2 some would apply to Elihu; but Job takes these words as directed against himself. (ch. xlii. 3.) The argument of Elihu is prosecuted, and carried farther in the sentences which follow, and which sentences are pointedly and personally directed to Job himself. God speaks to him the

language of a challenge to controversy—and demands an answer from him to the questions now on the eve of being proposed; and they are precisely such questions as establish the philosophy and principle of true Christian wisdom.—O that I felt as I ought the sovereignty and the omniscience which are here asserted of God, as compared with my own utter ignorance and imbecility. What know we of that in God which originated the forth-puttings of His creative power? or what understanding have we of the nature and the principles of this stupendous workmanship—when the angels of God, and the worlds themselves may be said to have shouted aloud for joy? What force and beauty in these sentences!

8-15.—What is here said of the sea may refer either to the first or the third day's work of Creation. It is represented as issuing forth from the earth, so as that it might have immerged all, even to the highest mountains, had not God commanded a place for it—hollowed out a receptacle, and fixed it there within impassable limits. (Gen. i. 9. and Ps. civ. 6-9.) Clouds are not only above it, but surround as with a band its farthest visible confines, and lost in distance, it may be said, that darkness compasseth it about.—Then mention is made of the succession of day and night. When the morning lays hold of the earth, the wicked flee to their lurking-places. (ch. xxiv. 15-17.) As the clay presents visible characters when the seal presses on it—so when light covers the earth its features and lineaments stand forth to view. *They*, the ends of the earth, the earth to its uttermost limits stands forth in the variety of its rich garniture and clothing, to the admiration of beholders. This light, however, brings no joy to the wicked, whom it detects, and by bringing them

to exposure and punishment, darkens and puts out all their prosperity. The passage is not without its uncertainties.

16-30.—Further mysteries are proposed, to humble Job and convince him of his ignorance—the depths of the sea—the depths of the earth, beneath whose surface the Hades or abodes of the dead are conceived to be situated—the breadth of the earth, a subject full of darkness in these times, when both its form and extent were altogether unknown—for " declare if thou knowest it at all ;"—the profound enigma of light in its nature and origin. The eternity of God is made an argument for our silence and submission. Were we born when all these things were evolved from the womb of eternity, or can we measure our experience and length of observation with Him who is the Ancient of Days? And then come the profound secrets of meteorology—to us unfathomable. The snow and the hail are God's servants, or magazines and stores of armour, wherewith He scatters discomfiture and death among His enemies.... Verse 24, is difficult. Light cometh from the east, and is thence scattered as by an east-wind over the earth. These questions convict Job of ignorance. There are others which might well convict him of impotency.—Who hath made a channel for the descent of these waters which flow upon the earth? or a way for the lightning? Who sends forth rain upon the desert, and fertilizes it without the help of man? Who originates these treasures of the sky?—and who manufactures them into the various forms of dew, and ice, and hail—so that the water becomes hard as a stone?

31-41.—There is a surpassing beauty and power in the description as it flows onward, and tells of the sweet influences of the Pleiades, and the bands of Orion, and the families of various constellations—whence the transition

is natural, to the higher regions of the atmosphere, whereof Job knew but little, and wherein he could do absolutely nothing. But the surpassing achievement of Omnipotence, and the farthest out of man's reach, is that which proceeds from His mastery over the world of mind—when He put wisdom into the inward part, and endowed His rational creatures with understanding. But the description soon returns to the material and the visible, and the first question is—who can lay an arrest upon the rain, when what before was loose dust is hardened into tenacious and firm clods? And then there is reference to God as the only Provider. What can man do in this respect—can he open his hand, and supply the need of every thing that lives? Ought man then to compare himself with God, or sit in judgment upon His way, or presumptuously arraign the procedure of His high and heavenly administration?

Job xxxix. 1-8.—The design of this remonstrance with Job, is to convict him both of the want of knowledge and the want of power, and so to lay him prostrate before the omnipotent and all-seeing God. There is here a transition made from the inorganic to the organic creation, and more especially to the wonders of physiology, in the birth and growth of animals. Who can penetrate the arcana of this department in Nature; and what lessons of humility are to be drawn from our contemplations thereof? And when we shift our regards from the origin and growth of living creatures to the finished specimens themselves—what noble products do we behold of the Almighty power and wisdom! This is exemplified, first, in the wild ass—whose habitat and whose habits are both described—his free and fearless range over the wide amplitudes of the desert—

his exemption from all control—his intolerance of all restraint—his proud disregard of men, and defiance of all their attempts to lord it over him. The spirit and gait of the animal, along with the glories of that boundless arena over which he expatiates, form a high theme for such a representation as is here made of it....We behold here how God rejoices over His own works—as He did from the first day of their creation, when He pronounced on them "that they were all very good." Does not this warrant our delight in the study of these works, and our indulgence of the admiration that we feel for them? But let all our pursuits, whether in the walks of sentiment or science, be sanctified by our association of them with God, the Author and Upholder of all things.

9-18.—The next specimen of God's workmanship in zoology is the unicorn—equally untameable, and as much beyond the management of human strength or skill, as his predecessor in this enumeration. The questions regarding him, when thus brought forward in detail, serve to impress us with a sense of our helplessness, when we attempt to control those forces which God hath instituted, and which He alone can control. And there is after this a sanction for our admiration—not of the strength only, but of the beauty which pervades the whole of animated nature. In the tribute here given to the goodliness of the peacock's wings, we are strongly reminded of our Saviour's testimony to the flowers in the field, surpassing in glory all the array of Solomon. And then what a further sanction to the natural science, which tells of the specialities in the habit and condition of animals; and there are none more fitted to excite our wonder and interest than those of the ostrich, no less signalized by speed and

strength than she is by her want of foresight and understanding. There is an obscurity in the clause of "her labour being in vain without fear." Her labour in producing seems not in keeping with her carelessness and fearlessness as to the product—a carelessness due to the want of wisdom, but which is made up for by Him who ordained and regulates the processes of Nature, by which the heat of the weather suffices for the hatching of the young, after the eggs are deposited in the sand.

19-30.—From the scorn which is felt by the ostrich for the horse, transition is made to the horse itself, in the truly magnificent representation of which, we have one of the sublimest passages in the Bible. In the clothing of his neck with thunder, the very indefiniteness of the image adds to the immense power; nor can we figure a more gorgeous and impressive picture than is here given of this noble creature—it must be left to speak for itself; and the argument passes on to other exemplifications, as the hawk poising herself in the air, and cleaving it with a power which man is unable to comprehend, and far less to imitate. The description closes with the eagle, king of the birds, and with whom there stand associated so many lofty and commanding images—as the elevated crag in which it builds its nest, the munition of those rocks where it dwells and rears up its young, the pride of its superiority over all other tenants of the air, whom it holds in perpetual subjection and terror, and seizes upon for its prey. The force of her far-seeing eye, and the ravenous appetite both of herself and her young ones for blood, are here powerfully depicted—all serving to enhance our view of the littleness of man in comparison with the God who made all and sustains all.

JOB XL. 1-5.—On the premises already laid down, the question is put to Job—who had been contending with his Maker, and even daring to reprove the Most High—whether man—mortal and created man—is competent to the task of instructing the great Author and Artificer of all things? And it is such a question as drew forth an answer from Job, who here interposes with the confession of his own vileness, and the promise that he will now take his becoming part of uncomplaining silence under the visitation of his Sovereign in the heavens. He will henceforth lay his hand upon his mouth—he will suffer in lowly submission to the discipline and the chastisement of an all-righteous God. He had spoken more than once, and most unadvisedly; but now under the power of a demonstration which he felt to be irresistible, he would drink of the cup that was put into his hands, and endure all which the great Disposer of man might please to lay upon him. It is thus that man should ever deport himself under all the events and dispensations of God's wise and holy providence.—Give me, O Lord, thus to observe and to do. Let me be still, and know that Thou art God.

6-24.—The argument is again resumed; and God again challenges Job to the combat; or rather speaks to him in the language of encouragement—raising him as it were from his state of prostration, and bidding him stand up with the erect spirit and countenance of a man. Yet to complete the advocacy on the side of God, does He again call upon Job to a view of the comparison between man and his Maker. He bids him, as if in irony, to put on the robes of a sovereign, and execute judgment on the wicked and proud oppressor, and so as to save the afflicted and injured from his hands. If he have power for

such an achievement as this—then will the Judge of all the earth admit of Job that his own right hand can save him. But the demonstration proceeds of God's wonderful strength and skill, as manifested in the structure and force of animals. There is not the sublimity in the account of behemoth that there is in the description of the horse—yet marvellously graphical. This behemoth is obviously a land animal—though it be not certain whether it is the bull, or elephant, or hippopotamus. He is called "chief of the ways of God," who as He made him can also destroy him. The description of his habitat is very picturesque.—To me the most impressive traits of the picture are, that he can "move his tail like a cedar," and that "his nose pierceth through snares." The enormous draught of water which he can take is strongly indicative, too, both of his strength and magnitude.

Job xli. 1-10.—There is the same power, the same force of painting and description in the representation here given of leviathan, the greatest of the sea animals—such a power in fact as to constitute in my mind an evidence for the inspiration of the passages. The utter helplessness of man for the management of such a creature, or for a conquest over him, is so put as to enhance our conceptions of that God who can turn the huge and unwieldy monster whithersoever He will.... There is admirable irony in the questions wherewith Job is here plied throughout the first seven verses—what I should call a richness of poetic fancy that greatly interests one in the reading of this passage. The third and fifth verses may be selected as specimens of this:—Job is there challenged to lay his hand upon him, but told that he must refrain from the encounter and do no

more. If not able to stand against the creature whom God hath made, how shall we be able to stand against God himself? If the hope of seizing him is vain, and man should desist from the controversy, why should Job persevere in his unavailing contest with God?

11-24.—After having said—Who is able to stand before me?—He now says—Who hath a claim upon me?—who hath first given unto me that I should give unto him again? (Rom. xi. 35.) And having affirmed all things to be His, He returns to the leviathan; and we are here presented with a truly magnificent description of him. It is most interesting to mark this delighted contemplation by God of His own works—thus stamping a warrant of sacredness on our tasteful admiration of them—as of the parts, and the power, and the comely proportion of this noble creature. Who can approach or come so near as to put the bridle into him? The "face of his garment" may just be the outer surface of the skin, which is his clothing. The "doors of his face" is a highly poetical expression; and still more beautifully so is the comparison of his eyes to the eyelids of the morning. And what an impression of strength is given by the impenetrable closeness of his scales and flakes of flesh—as well as of his marvellous power—in the light given forth by his neesings, and the electric fire that he casts about him by his breathing and agitations in the water. The "sorrow being turned into joy" is not very clear: it may be that the sorrow of others whom he makes his prey is his joy. The strength of his inward part is most forcibly depicted.

25-34.—This excellency both of might and gracefulness is all the more enhanced by the helplessness of them who are opposed to him. The last clause of verse 25 is

obscure and variously interpreted. It may be that when he throws the sea into breakers by his motion they repent of their sins as if on the eve of perishing.—Then follows a fine description of his superiority to fear and danger. What a *vis poetica* in the trait of his laughing at the shaking of a spear! So impenetrable is the lining of his body that he can lie with ease on the sharp stones that are under him, or as if in ostentation of his hardiness, is represented as spreading them beneath him upon the mire. And the effect of his movement in the waters is given with great strength of imagery and expression—raising such a commotion there as to make the sea like a boiling pot. The electric luminousness that is excited by these agitations is here again adverted to; and there is immense power in the feature that "one would think the deep to be hoary." It is made white and foamy, like curled and white hair, by the number of bells which ascend from his path, and by which, though himself unseen, one might trace his progress through the deep. Altogether he is unrivalled, and stands in fear of nothing—the proudest of the proud, or one so superior in strength and greatness to the proud ones of the earth that they might well be humbled in the contemplation of him. There are various conjectures respecting leviathan, whether he be whale or crocodile. It is truly a gorgeous representation that is here given of him; nor is the last trait the least impressive, where he is represented as looking down upon all things, and as king over all the children of pride.

JOB XLII.—After this appeal to the works of God is completed, Job breaks silence—deferring to the power of God, and also to His omniscience, in that He had spoken

powerfully to the conviction and conscience of the afflicted patriarch. He confesses his error, and now supplicates instead of complaining—his demand now being turned from the tone of a challenge to that of humble entreaty. But it was more the sight of God than the power of His argument that seems to have overpowered him. Now that mine eye seeth Thee, I abhor myself.—Give us, O Lord, to behold in Thy sacredness what vile and sinful creatures we are.

The friends of Job now came under the rebuke of God's displeasure. Job had been guilty of impatient utterances, but he had the root of the matter in him, and a warrantable consciousness thereof. But they had misinterpreted both his afflictions and the ways of Him that is above. They were commanded therefore to do penance and humble themselves before Him.

And the Lord made up to him for all his losses. It is not said how; and let not us say more than that he was restored to a second fortune and a second family. He died at a great and patriarchal age; and ranks, in my estimation, as one of the undoubted magnates of Scripture history.

END OF VOLUME SECOND.

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GLASGOW CHRONICLE.
ABERDEEN JOURNAL.
CORK ADVERTISER.
NORTHERN WHIG.
LONDONDERRY STANDARD.
GLASGOW CONSTITUTIONAL.
LEINSTER EXPRESS.
ABERDEEN BANNER.
DUMFRIES COURIER.
EDINBURGH EVENING COURANT.
LONDONDERRY SENTINEL.
ABERDEEN HERALD.
BELFAST NEWS LETTER.

DR. CHALMERS' DAILY SCRIPTURE READINGS.

[We want short, sound, and judicious notes upon Scripture, without running into common-places, pursuing controversies, or reducing those notes to artificial method, but leaving them quite loose and native. For certainly, as those wines which flow from the first treading of the grape are sweeter and better than those forced out by the press, which gives them the roughness of the husk and the stone, so are those doctrines best and sweetest which flow from a gentle crush of the Scriptures, and are not wrung into controversies and common-places.—LORD BACON.]

CRITICAL NOTICES OF VOLUME FIRST.

THE EXAMINER.

This handsome volume forms the first of a series which will comprise the whole of Dr. Chalmers' Posthumous Works, issued under the care and superintendence of his son-in-law, the Rev. William Hanna. It had been announced that these writings were left by their author in a state of much greater completeness for the press than is usual with posthumous publications, and that they differed also, for the most part, both in substance and style, from any of his previous productions. The greater part of them were understood to be of a practical and devotional character, couched in very familiar forms of expression, and divested of all formality of arrangement. We find this to be eminently the case with the work selected to open the series......The presence of Dr. Chalmers is predominant throughout. The singular *vitality* which was the characteristic of his genius, and which kept him as active and unwearied to the last day of his ministry as at the first, is transfused into every Scriptural comment. With what boyish interest he discusses the incidents of the Deluge ; how he lingers with Hagar in the wilderness, peopling it with the Arabs that have ever since, as then, marauded or wandered there ; how delightedly he dwells on the kindness and simplicity of the patriarchal manners in patriarchal times ; and with what beauty draws forth the touching, affectionate, or noble traits of Abraham's life and character ; what exquisite susceptibility he shows to those least little touches of natural feeling which identify the Rachels, and Jacobs, and Labans, and Rebekahs, with our modern life and customs ; with what a personal love he follows the fortunes of good, mild, venerable Isaac, through all the trials and vicissitudes of his children ; with what national naïveté he sets forth Sterne, and Shakespeare, *and Mackenzie*, as unequal to cope in pathos with Judah's address to Joseph; with what relish he enjoys the details of the erection of the tabernacle, dwelling on the very ornaments of the candlestick, and drawing genial wisdom from their forms of grace ; how sublimely earnest is his following in the path of Moses ; and with what affectionate awe and love he waits upon the steps of "good old Joshua," the reader can only learn from the volume itself. There is never a misgiving of the life, the truth, the absolute reality, of a single passage. The venerable chronicle has been his lifelong study, and at a thought his vivid imagination lights up its inmost stores. He will have no discussion of the

miracles of Joshua. He *sees* the sun and moon that they *did* stand still; the one resting over Gibeon, and the other in the valley of Ajalon. He beholds, by no "optical delusion," the Land as it was shown to Moses; and, as they were deposited in the Ark of the Testimony, he looks on at the two Tables written by God's own hand. "What a relic!" he exclaims —"what a memorial of the living God for any people to have possessed!" We can conceive no book, for these reasons, so likely to be of beneficial tendency in private as well as family devotion.

THE ATHENÆUM. As his last great work, Dr. Chalmers had taken to reading over the history of the world, as the story of human nature is told in the "Old Book." In it are successively brought under review all the great questions of life:—the science of Job, the economics of Moses, the wisdom of Solomon, the poetry of David, the morality of Christ, the problem of creation, the game of human life, the promise of eternity. On all these his mind, with its extraordinary measure of knowledge and of power, is seen in these pages at work, as it were, before our eyes. Daily for six years has the phenomenon of a great mind working out all the highest questions of humanity been continuously recorded and preserved for us here to study.

It is not the least valuable circumstance attending the published sheets of this psychological register, that it was not designed for publication. It reports the occupation of an intelligence always active, and bent mainly in these last hours—these *Horæ Biblicæ*—on self-culture. Imagine a well-balanced mind, conscious of the effect which prejudices of education and of association produce upon ideas, deeply conscious of its fallibility, and earnestly determined to devote the leisure of the last hours of existence to disembarrassing itself of error, and retaining only that which is true, and beautiful, and good! Sitting down with child-like simplicity to this task for six long years, Dr. Chalmers has here left us, as we have said, an uninterrupted series of such earnest thoughts as recorded his progress in knowledge and in truth. It is in this light, as psychological phenomena of high interest, that we look at them.

THE SPECTATOR. This volume is the first of a series designed to embrace the whole of the Posthumous Works of the late Dr. Chalmers, arranged in five formal or four substantive classes. The first class will be Scripture Readings, a species of personal commentary or remark on the author's private reading, of which the first volume is before us......The variety is remarkable: philosophical, political, social, and moral speculations, in addition to direct religion, well out according to the character of the text, from the reiteration of the writer's thirty-year old geological views upon the meaning of "In the beginning," down to the fatiguing minuteness of the ceremonial law. Over this he throws relief if not light; now tracing a support to forms and externals from the directions touching the priest's dress, now upholding the antiquity and obligation of tithes; anon, finding something to justify Voluntaryism, then to support Endowments......The brevity of the Readings adds much to their variety and interest; somewhat resembling in this respect "Ana" or "Table Talk;" but it militates against the display of the author's peculiar *eloquence*. It cannot, however, conceal his genial nature, or his love of truth, that shows itself in an unconscious exhibition of himself, as well as in a candid admission of difficulties that more learned theologians have attempted to explain.

THE LITERARY GAZETTE.

The genius and learning of Dr. Chalmers, having nothing to do with polemical points or theological differences, formed a rare union of brilliancy and depth. He was a great man, a good man, and a true and zealous Christian. In heart and in brain, in mind and in soul, we may say Dr. Chalmers was one in a million of created beings; and his thoughts upon any subject must claim very serious consideration—upon religious topics, all that earnestness of concentrated thought which belongs to questions of so momentous a nature. In this book, a journal, commencing in 1841, lays before us his most secret and sacred sabbatical communings, and his commentaries on the Bible as daily read by him—verse by verse, and chapter by chapter, and embracing every view he took of them—social, illustrative, historical, moral, divine. Can any reader doubt that a vast body of information and instruction must thus have been elicited from such a teacher; and that he has poured forth a rich stream of intelligence to interest mankind.

THE ATLAS.

We have here the first volume of the Bible studies of a great and good man. It is a book which few will open without deep interest and deeper reverence. Being dead he yet speaketh. The teacher has not gone from amongst us; his solemn tones still vibrate on the ear and sink into the hearts of his disciples.

"The two series of Biblical compositions," writes Dr. Hanna, the editor of the present work, in a gracefully written preface, "were commenced by Dr. Chalmers in October 1841, and continued with unbroken regularity till the day of his decease. Go where he might, however he might be engaged, each week-day had its few verses read, thought over, written upon—forming what he denominated *Horæ Biblicæ Quotidianæ*. Each Sabbath-day had its two chapters, one in the Old and the other in the New Testament, with the two trains of meditative devotion recorded, to which the reading of them respectively gave birth—forming what he denominated *Horæ Biblicæ Sabbaticæ*......The *Quotidianæ* volumes lay where access was not forbidden—they were shown occasionally to a familiar friend; but to no eye—not even to that of his nearest relative—were the *Sabbaticæ* ever exposed." It is the first volume of the *Quotidianæ* that we have now before us......Dr. Chalmers does not appear in these pages merely as a great moralist or a great divine. He is at once the divine, the moralist, the man of science, the artist, and—in the better sense of the phrase—the man of the world. They who erroneously connect an idea of sectarianism with the name of Thomas Chalmers, will do well to study these commentaries. There is no tinge of sectarianism upon them. They are imbued, indeed, throughout with a catholic spirit, and glow with that universal kindliness which was so distinguishing a characteristic of the man......After commenting on the opening verses of the eighteenth chapter of Genesis, in which Abraham is described as going out to meet the angelic strangers on the plains of Mamre, there gushes out from the fountain of his heart a tide of devotional humility, in the genial words, "Let me not hide myself as heretofore from my own flesh. Let me remember that hospitality even to the unknown, exemplified in the Old, is expressly enjoined in the New Testament, and under the warrant too of the example recorded in the earlier Scriptures—'For thereby some have entertained angels unaware.' I have much to learn and much to unlearn ere I attain the perfection of the second law."—A passage to be pondered upon by those whose notions of practical piety embrace a rigid exclusive-

ness—a hard, unamiable denial of social claims and obligations—a self-involved asceticism, which is often little more than another form of self-indulgence.

THE DAILY NEWS.

These works are sure of a sale in Scotland; and for Englishmen they will be found to possess great interest......The Daily Readings, regarded as a devotional manual, are large and catholic in their characteristics.......In sentiment Dr. Chalmers seems to have approached more to the Leightons and Taylors of the Episcopal than to the stern Knoxes of the Presbyterian Church.

JERROLD'S NEWSPAPER.

"We want," writes Lord Bacon, "short, sound, and judicious notes upon Scripture, without running into common-places, pursuing controversies, or reducing those notes to artificial method, but leaving them quite loose and native. For certainly, as those wines which flow from the first treading of the grape are sweeter and better than those forced out by the press, which gives them the roughness of the husk and the stone, so are those doctrines best and sweetest which flow from a gentle crush of the Scriptures, and are not wrung into controversies and commonplaces."

This volume answers precisely to Lord Bacon's requirements, and gives us "the first flowings of Scripture;" and if the very nature of its composition, and still more the posthumous manner of its publication, detract from the completeness of a commentary, yet we have something more valuable in its room. Commentators write what they wish us to think. Here we have unreservedly what Dr. Chalmers thought. And he was no ordinary thinker. The originality of remark sustained throughout this volume would show it, had we nothing else. And we have his thoughts clothed in a natural colloquial language, which will be new to our readers in a work of this nature, and constitutes, to our mind at least, no inconsiderable portion of its attraction.

The human side of Scripture has been too generally overlooked, and its inspired character misapplied and distorted. And harm has been done by this. Men have experienced a natural revulsion of feeling; and seeing that the Scriptures have undoubtedly a human side—are human writings, they have been led to question their Divine pretensions as inconsistent. Now, had we a friend who was inclined to reject or doubt the authority of the Old Testament on this score, there is no book to which we would send him sooner than to this volume of Dr. Chalmers, where he will find the most free and fearless way of treating Scripture, combined with the deepest faith in its authority. We never find him blinking a difficulty. If he sees one, he acknowledges and leaves it. In the Mosaic account of creation, which some have thought to present a point of adverse contact between revelation and science, he sees no difficulty at all. Between the creation of matter, and the works of the six days, we can allow, he says, for geology the amplest times for its various revolutions, without infringing even on the literalities of the Mosaic record.

THE LONDON OBSERVER.

The first volume of the Posthumous Works of the late Dr. Chalmers, so anxiously anticipated, not only by the religious world, but by the admirers of all that is mighty in intellect and exalted in morals, has

just made its appearance. It is of a purely practical nature......The "Sabbath Meditations" are deeply impregnated with the spirit of an enlightened and intense piety. They reveal to us the arcana of the author's mind in its more spiritual, and consequently more secret operations. "The Scripture Readings" are somewhat different in their design and execution. They are partly experimental, and partly expository. They blend information with devotion. The unpublished discourses on various subjects, which are to constitute a portion of the volumes, will be looked forward to with a special interest. But the part of the series from which we expect the greatest gratification, and which is sure to be most popular with the mass of readers, will be the life and correspondence of the author. We shall much be mistaken if, from what we know of many of those in every walk of literature, as well as in every department of theology, with whom he carried on an extensive correspondence, this part of the series does not prove, as we observed on a former occasion, the most charming and instructive volumes which have appeared in modern times. In the meantime, we are happy to see a beginning made with the publication of the Posthumous Works of the most distinguished divine of the age.

THE MORNING ADVERTISER.

We greet with a cordial welcome what may be regarded as the utterances from the tomb of one of the greatest theologians, and most intellectual men of his day. It is some consolation to know, that though Dr. Chalmers is no longer among us, the ear of the mind, if we may so express ourselves, is still privileged to listen to the words of heavenly wisdom from his lips. By his previous publications, though dead, he yet speaketh; but in the appearance of his Posthumous Works, we listen to accents which never before regaled our ears......Everything is vivid and distinct; nothing vague or indefinite. It is delightful and instructive to see how a mind like that of the deceased could extract the very essence of evangelical piety from passages in the Old Testament, which the ordinary reader would pass over as dry and devoid of interest......It would be an indication of bad taste to recommend anything on a theological subject, which emanated from the lips or pen of such a man as Dr. Chalmers. We have done our duty when we have announced the appearance of the first of the posthumous series of volumes. They will conduce, to an extent of which it is impossible to form a conception, to the furtherance of personal piety, and to the promotion of evangelical religion among all classes of Christians.

THE NONCONFORMIST.

Multitudes have rejoiced in the announcement that Dr. Chalmers left behind him papers sufficient to fill many volumes. Posthumous publications in general are not attractive. They bear so marked an impression of utilitarianism, and are so manifestly eked out by matter not intended, and often not fit, for the public eye, that there are few things that excite less interest than their promise or appearance. The case before us is an exception. Dr. Chalmers was so great and good a man, and an author of such sterling worth, that any additional works from his pen, especially if designed for publication, are sure to meet with an eager welcome on the part of thousands, of every sect and class. Two circumstances are worthy of note here—the works "have been left in a state of much greater preparedness for the press than is usual with posthumous publications," and "they differ, for the most part, both in substance and in style, from any of his previous productions."

THE MORNING CHRONICLE. The first volume of the Posthumous Works of Dr. Chalmers will be welcomed by all who duly appreciate the labours of one of the most eminent of Christian philosophers, and eloquent of Christian pastors. The series is to comprise several works, all of which, it may confidently be expected, will prove of sterling value and unsurpassed interest. ......The "Daily Scripture Readings" consist of a biblical commentary, and we may say that the pen of the great preacher was never more happy than in its composition. The thoughts are bathed in the holiest spirit of devotional musing, informed with wisdom and fraught with sacred lore, whilst the language breathes the soul of poetry and eloquence.

THE PATRIOT. Dr. Chalmers threw so much vigour and heart into all that he wrote, and took so lively an interest in the meditative perusal of the sacred page, that these papers have the charm of originality, while bearing the impress of ingenuous piety, and exhibiting "the mature fruits of a whole lifetime's study of the Divine Oracles." The object for which, and the manner in which they were prepared, while they will prepare the reader not to expect any profound criticism, give them, as Dr. Hanna observes, "a value far beyond what any larger measure of mere Biblical scholarship employed in their preparation could have bestowed." We question, indeed, whether they would have gained anything, had they been more carefully elaborated, so as to assume the character of a critical or doctrinal commentary.

THE WATCHMAN. Our own impression of this work—so far as the section now before us enables us to judge—is, that it will tend rather to the further establishment of Dr. Chalmers' character as a *good* man, than as a *great* man. His *greatness* already rests upon firm foundations; his *goodness*—by which term we mean no latitudinarian or socialist theory of human perfectibility, irrespective of Divine grace, but the goodness which by the mercy of God the Father, through the death and intercession of the Redeemer, God the Son, is wrought in the heart by the mighty operation of God the Holy Ghost—is also well known; but it shines out here with an unaffected but deeply solemn and impressive earnestness beyond what we have observed in his earlier productions. It seems as if the excellent man, as the close of his honoured and useful life drew nigh, became more and more deeply impressed with the realities of eternity, and more and more determined to subordinate everything of intellectual power and human learning to the simplicity of the Gospel of Christ.

THE BRITISH BANNER. There is something in this beautiful volume at once testamentary and monumental. The first part of it consists in what is called "The Sabbath Exercises," on which, we doubt not, the Christian Church will place great store. They are excellent delineations of the secret workings of a mighty spirit, and leave nothing to be regretted, but that they are not more extended......The bulk of the volume is composed of "Daily Scripture Readings," extending from Genesis to Joshua inclusive. Of these readings nothing less can be said than that they are worthy of him whose name they bear, and that, instrumentally, they are remarkably calculated to promote the edification of the Church of God. The work is beautifully characteristic, abounding in that peculiar raciness, deep sagacity, and in those felicitous turns, and happy touches, for which Dr. Chalmers was, above most men, remarkable.

NORTH BRITISH REVIEW.

Were we desirous of giving to one who had never seen or heard Dr. Chalmers, an idea of what manner of man he was—what he was as a whole—in the full run of his notions, his tastes, and affections, and powers—we would put this book into their hands, and ask them to read it slowly, bit by bit, as he wrote it. In it he puts down simply and at once what passes through his mind as he reads—there is no making of himself feel and think—no getting into a frame of mind—he was not given to frames of mind—he preferred states to forms—substances to circumstances. There is something and everything in it—his relish for abstract thought—his love of sounding depths and finding no bottom—his power of starting questions, for he did not care to run them home—his simple, penetrating, regulating godliness—his delight in nature—his turn for politics—general, economical, and ecclesiastical—his picturesque eye—his humane, his inherent courtesy—his warm-heartedness—his impetuosity—his sympathy in all the wants, and delights, and sorrows of his kind—past, present, and to come. His delight in the law of God, and his simple, devout, manly treatment of it—his acknowledgment of difficulties—his turn for numbers, and indeed for natural science and art generally—his shrewdness—his worldly wisdom—his genius—all these come out—you gather them like fruit—here a little and there a little. He goes over the Bible, not as a philosopher, or a theologian, or a historian, or a geologist, or a jurist, or a naturalist, or a statist, or a politician—picking out all that he wants, and a great deal more than he has any business with, and leaving everything else as barren to his reader as it has been to himself, but he looks abroad upon his *Father's word*, as he used pleasantly to do on his *world*—as a man and as a Christian—he submits himself to its influences, and lets his mind go out fully and naturally in its utterances, which gives to this work all the charms of multitude in unity, variety in perfect harmony—and that sort of unexpectedness and ease of movement which we see everywhere in nature and in natural men.

BIBLICAL REVIEW.

When a leader of the front rank of those who are contending for truth and light is cut off by a sudden death, our first feeling is that of surprise, as if we had so identified the individual with the place which it was given him to occupy for a time, as almost to forget the law which is inseparable from human agency, that "one generation passeth away, and another cometh." Recovered from the first shock of astonishment, and having indulged the natural impulse of sorrow for such a loss, we begin to inquire for enduring memorials by which the departed may still live amongst us, in the undying energy of his works. Seldom is such a desire met by the prospect of such abundant satisfaction, as in the case of Dr. Chalmers......That the publication of these most interesting remains will be conducted with all the care and skill which such a task demands, the name of the editor, Dr. Hanna, will be to many a sufficient guarantee......A few extracts taken almost at random from the whole work, would exhibit the Christian, the philosopher, the theologian, something of the patriot, but, above *all*, the *man*—with all the frank and genuine manliness of his character in heart, in mind, and language—though accomplished in all science yet still simple as a child......It is chiefly in this that consists the inexpressible charm of the Horæ Biblicæ Quotidianæ. The whole series will form eight or nine octavo volumes, appearing quarterly at a very moderate price, and in a style of excellence and beauty as to print and paper, of which few publications of the kind furnish anything like a comparable example.

CHURCH OF ENGLAND REVIEW. "He being dead yet speaketh." The Posthumous Works of one whom we have known and reverenced command attention as the last and most solemn of the admonitions that he can give us: it may be that we shall hear his dying words, and that we shall learn thereby so to live that we may die the death of the righteous, and that our latter end may be like his: and the volume now before us may literally be regarded as a portion of the last words of Dr. Chalmers; for it is the first part of a series of Daily Meditations which was begun in October 1841, and continued with unbroken regularity till the day of his decease. We think, moreover, that these, the Daily Meditations of Dr. Chalmers, will be by many esteemed to be the most precious portion of his works, from their experimental character, opening the heart of the writer, and therefore going direct to the heart of the reader likewise. They are not elaborate deductions requiring critical acumen, or calling upon us to brace our minds to a long and close logical argument; but they consist "of his first and readiest thoughts clothed in the first and readiest words."

THE ENGLISH REVIEW. The volume before us is the first of the edition of Dr. Chalmers' Posthumous Works in course of publication. It comprises an introduction, consisting of Meditations written on Sundays, by Dr. Chalmers, during the latter years of his life, exhibiting his impressions of his own religious state, and giving free expression to his devotional feelings. These will be read with interest and respect......The Commentary is familiar and easy, but abounding in thought and in devotional feeling.

FREE CHURCH MAGAZINE. We cannot forbear expressing our extreme gratification with the manner in which the Editor, Dr. Hanna, has accomplished his delicate duty. The Preface, from his pen, is distinguished by a very rare combination of refined delicacy of taste, easy elegance of style, and sound judgment, proving him to be peculiarly well qualified for the right discharge of the very important duty which he has been called on to undertake. All the friends of Dr. Chalmers may feel confident, that the delicate charge of editing his Posthumous Works could not have been placed in more competent hands. Higher approbation we could not well express; and we delight thus publicly to express it......In these Exercises and Readings of Dr. Chalmers, there is placed before us, not the unconscious autobiography of confidential friendship, but the vastly more profound and solemn autobiography of the soul of that great and holy man, expressed in its reverential communings with God, and in the manner in which it accords with the tones, and answers to the sentiments of the Holy Spirit speaking in the Scriptures.

THE EVANGELICAL MAGAZINE. We think it a peculiarly happy circumstance that the Memoirs of Dr. Chalmers, and the editorial labours connected with the publication of his "Posthumous Works," have fallen into the hands of one in every way so capable of doing justice to the undertaking. Irrespective of the considerations of relationship, and of well known mental superiority, the tone and temper of Dr. Hanna's preface to the *Horæ Biblicæ Quotidianæ* have convinced us that the deceased exercised a wise discretion in selecting his son-in-law as his biographer, and the editor of his unpublished manuscripts......No great difficulty has arisen in the mind of the editor as to the

propriety of giving these Scriptural Readings to the public, because Dr. Chalmers, while living, did not take any pains to conceal them from the gaze of his friends, many of whom were permitted to look at them, and to examine their contents. But as it respects the Sabbath Readings, or *Horæ Sabbaticæ*, great perplexity has been felt as to the path of duty......If our judgment is of any value to the respected editor, we would express it as our conscientious impression, that he has not only done right, but displayed high moral courage and virtue, in overstepping all *prima facie* scruples, and looking simply at the good likely to be effected in thousands of closets, while the secret communings with God of such a man as Dr. Chalmers are deeply and prayerfully pondered. There is nothing in them that may not meet the public eye; though it was quite natural that Dr. Chalmers should, while living, conceal his more immediate converse with God.

UNITED PRESBYTERIAN MAGAZINE. In this Posthumous Work the character of its distinguished author is presented under a new phase. As hitherto seen by the world, he has been known as the most powerful of modern preachers, as a zealous philanthropist, and as an eminent ecclesiastical leader in the Church to which he belonged. What we remember of the illustrious dead was his "marvellous oratory" in the pulpit, and the fruits of his luminous imaginative and elaborate pen in works prepared for the press. ......We have in the work before us what must be deeply gratifying to every one acquainted with his genius and labours—the author in his undress—sitting down with the Bible in his hand, to receive and apply to himself its lessons with the unquestioning docility of a child......The style corresponds with the subject of the volume. There is nothing laboured—all is direct and simple—an artless, undisguised revelation of the workings of his intellect and heart.

THE BAPTIST MAGAZINE. These "Scripture Readings" will be valued highly by all intelligent and devout readers. They are, in fact, a brief commentary, but a commentary written for the author's own use—the plain, terse, unsophisticated record of his thoughts, resolutions of difficulties satisfactory to his own mind, and reflections which he desired should be impressed upon his own heart. The individual man, Dr. Chalmers himself, is visible throughout, working out inquiries, and making remarks which seem perfectly natural, and the insight into which is to the reader instructive and delightful. Short, pertinent, and lively as the comments are, it occurs to us that excellent use may be made of them in various ways, and particularly at prayer meetings, or in congregations in which worship is carried on without the aid of a preacher. To read two or three chapters, with these notes interspersed, we should think infinitely preferable to the practice sometimes resorted to of reading a sermon.

CHRISTIAN LADY'S MAGAZINE. Dr. Chalmers had been, for some years previous to his death, in the habit of daily recording the most vivid thoughts that were suggested to his mind by the passages of Scripture he read. His motives for so doing he thus explains :—" In reading the Life of Sir Matthew Hale, I find that he employed the pen to aid him in his spiritual meditations. He wrote as he thought; and hitherto my attempts at the sustained contemplation of Divine things have been so confused and unsatisfactory, that I am glad to try the same expedient. May the Spirit of God, who worketh not

without means, but by them, bless this humble endeavour after a nearer approach to the viewless objects of faith and eternity." It is these valuable papers which are here given to the public, as they were left by their honoured author. They are preceded by some deeply interesting Sabbath Exercises, in which his own feelings and inward conflicts are expressed—in which we see this father in Christ struggling with the same difficulties and temptations under which his weaker brethren groaned, feeling the pressure of worldly anxiety, and the burden of dulness and apathy of spirit. From all these burdens he has now found perfect rest, and we may be encouraged by his example, to struggle on yet a while, knowing that in due season we shall reap if we faint not.

EVANGELICAL CHRISTENDOM. It is a noble sight to see the man of lofty and sanctified intellect presiding in the schools, and forming the philosophers and theologians of the next generation, who, meanwhile, gather round his chair in profound admiration of his varied endowments, and captivated by the magic of his incomparable eloquence; but there is something nobler still in the sight of the same man sitting down himself before the majesty of God's word, and saying, with the docility of a little child, "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth." And this is the attitude in which this book brings before us one who, with the highest reputation, filled successive chairs, and shed a lustre on them all. We have grown familiar with Dr. Chalmers as the moral philosopher and the accomplished divine, as the eloquent orator and the skilful logician—it remained for us to see him as a learner frequenting the sources of celestial truth, and as a simple believer feeding on the manna which came down from heaven. There is a force and freshness in these Daily Meditations, which show with what a relish "he handled the word of life;" and they have reminded us of the prophet's language, "Thy words were found and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of my heart"..... The simple utterances of his first thoughts, and his first feelings, as he read each successive portion of the inspired writings, give to these pages a charm which no elaboration or subsequent polish could have imparted, and, in the words of Dr. Hanna, "attach to them a value far beyond that which any larger measure of mere biblical scholarship embarked in their preparation could have bestowed." We shall receive these *Horæ Biblicæ Quotidianæ*, and *Horæ Biblicæ Sabbaticæ*, as a precious legacy to the Church of God; and if we may judge of what is yet to come, by what has been already furnished in the present volume, we shall read them not once or twice, but recur to them again and again, and linger over them as in hallowed fellowship with the mind that produced them, and devoutly rejoicing that, great as may be the intellectual disparity between the writer and the reader, when they come into the presence of ETERNAL TRUTH, "the brother of low degree is exalted," and the brother of high degree "is made low," and both stand on the basis of a common redemption, and exult in the possession of a common hope.

JERSEY CHRISTIAN RECORD. These "Daily Readings," written solely for private use, have a freshness and originality about them—a vigour of thought, and a godly sincerity and simplicity, which render the perusal of them remarkably edifying. The upright and powerful mind, the fervid genius, the affectionate heart, the genial and tolerant spirit, ever delighting in scenes of domestic happiness, are evident on every page; and there is besides a child-like humility, an engaging simplicity, and even a repentant and self-condemning

tone, which make us feel quite at home with this great man, and remind us strongly of the Apostle Paul......We cordially recommend the volume. In it, Dr. Chalmers, though dead, yet speaketh with a power more tender and solemn than when living. The Church wants such works to revive her drooping piety.

THE WITNESS.

Of all voices the most impressive are the voices from the tomb—those by which the departed, though dead, yet continue to speak. They come, like the responses of the ancient oracles, from behind an impenetrable veil, fraught with solemn associations of the unseen state; and appeal to minds awakened for the time to attention and interest by the sadness of recent bereavement, or the tenderness of regret. The aroused feelings speak powerfully in behalf of warnings and testimonies given from the sepulchre. The advice of a dead father has been effectual often in producing a reformation in character, which, so long as he lived, it had been wholly inadequate to induce; the affectionate solicitations of a departed mother have exerted an influence on conduct, through the fact of her departure, which, ere the grave closed over her, they had altogether failed to exert. In another sense than that of the Apostle, the testimony which was without force so long as the testator lived, becomes a powerful instrument in consequence of his death.

There attaches, on this principle, a peculiar value to the Posthumous Writings of Chalmers. The powerful voice, ever earnest and affectionate, of this lover of his species and of his God, borrows a double impressiveness from the echoes of the tomb. And there is another and distinct principle. We see more of the man exhibited in these writings—more of his inner life, than in any of the works which he himself gave to the world. There are authors of comparatively limited powers of observation, but remarkable for a faculty of self-exploration, if we may so speak, whose delight and forte it is, in all their writings, to portray the inner workings of their own minds......But such was not the character of Chalmers; and from no such turbid source did that all-pervading earnestness spring forth, which formed the element in which he lived and moved. We have been informed by a literary gentleman, who, when meditating a work on Scotland, applied to Chalmers for a few snatches of his biography, that though he found him full on every other matter, on his own history he seemed never to have thought. He seemed never to have arranged an idea on the subject, or to have settled the space which it occupied in the ecclesiastical history of his country. And so it is only in those works in which, holding the pen for his own benefit alone, the paper served as the confidential repository of his internal communings, that we may expect to see the inner depths of his character laid bare. The commanding intellect of the man may be seen at least equally well in his other writings; but of the sincerity, the simplicity, and the inherent greatness, which so remarkably characterized him, we are to seek the finest and most unequivocal impress in his posthumous ones. The tomb, while it has for ever concealed his material features from our sight, has served distinctly to reveal those of his mind......The superior suggestiveness of mere sketches to finished drawings, if they be the sketches of a master, has been often noticed. Burke, with his usual happiness, refers to the circumstance in his semi-metaphysical essay. "The spring," he says, "is the pleasantest of the seasons; and the young of most animals, though far from being completely fashioned, afford a more agreeable sensation than the full grown, because the imagination is entertained with the promise of

something more, and does not acquiesce in the present object of the sense. In unfinished sketches of drawing, I have often seen something which pleased me beyond the best finishing; and this, I believe, proceeds from the cause I have just now assigned." The *Horæ Biblicæ* is, on this principle, a singularly suggestive work......We trust the Posthumous Writings of Chalmers are destined to exert a wholesome influence on the religious mind of the country.

THE NORTH BRITISH MAIL. The Edinburgh press never turned out a more handsome volume. It is a magnificent octavo, with an amplitude of margin giving the air of almost a small quarto. It is beautifully printed within faint lines, and without the slightest ornament of a meretricious kind, is quite a luxurious specimen of letterpress, inclining, in its purity and simplicity of text, rather to the antique than the modern ....Whatever expectations may have been formed of this work of Dr. Chalmers'—a work in which he appears in a new light and a new style altogether— we feel quite sure they will be far transcended by the admiration which the open and ingenuous piety of these pages must excite in the religious world, and the pleasure and surprise they must occasion in the mere world of letters .. ..There is in this book what will silence the scoffer, he knows not why, but will convert the sceptic, because he must perceive that the meditations here given forth are the work of one who doubted not the strength of his cause, who approached the strangest paradox of the Sacred Record with the confidence and simplicity of a child, to draw from it the richest consolations of grace and truth... ..The peasant in his cottage, and the ragged urchin in the territorial school, will melt before the persuasive simplicity of these earnest pages. And whenever the rich and the zealous are supplied with the finer and more expensive issue of this work, we entreat for a popular edition for every class of readers. Nothing short of this will do justice to its merits.

THE SCOTSMAN. Sometimes a whole chapter is at once reviewed, but most frequently only a few verses are cited and commented on. The remarks are generally very concise, each sentence consisting of a single thought, without any attempt to amplify it, or follow up the train of ideas it might suggest ..Many of the remarks are highly suggestive, and calculated to afford to the intelligent reader matter for deep and severe thinking; and every now and then we have examples of the writer's peculiar, and, for the most part, expressive phraseology; and as might be expected from the original design of the work, it is occasionally marked by elisions and abrupt transitions. One thing that strikes us is the great interest Dr. Chalmers seems to have taken in the simple picturesqueness, so to speak, of the Old Testament narratives, revealing an acute and delicate sense of the merely literary excellences of the Sacred Writings.

THE LIVERPOOL TIMES. The volume now before us consists of devotional expositions of passages of Scripture from Genesis to Joshua inclusive. It is full of beautiful thoughts, and contains many remarks of great depth and importance. The style is pure and simple, and well adapted for the subject; and although it differs from that of the author's writing in published works, it has a charm peculiarly its own. The same volume contains some perfect gems of devotional, or what are called "Sabbath Exercises," which were

found among Dr. Chalmers' private papers; and whether we consider this work as a contribution to our religious literature, or as a specimen of typography, it is one of the most interesting as well as elegant publications of the day, and will no doubt command that attention it so justly merits.

THE CALEDONIAN MERCURY. In the interesting volume now before us, we have the first instalment of a valuable legacy bequeathed by Thomas Chalmers to the world. We have great cause for gratitude in that he was permitted, in these his Daily and Sabbath Readings, so nearly to review the complete text of Holy Scripture; and judging from the portion (Genesis to Joshua inclusive) of the former series contained in the present volume, and the fragment of Sabbath Exercises prefixed, we may with confidence anticipate that, when combined, they will tend more to the spiritual and rational enlightenment of Bible students than any contribution which has yet been made to the religious literature of our country.

THE GLASGOW CITIZEN. To us the charm of this work consists in the individuality and personality of its character. We are admitted, as it were, not into the study of the elaborate divine, but into the private closet of the good man, with his Bible lying spread out before him, and the flush of a genuine delight playing over his features, as he reads, and meditates, and records the feelings, sentiments, and opinions which his reading suggests, as they come freshly welling up from the depths of a richly stored mind and imagination. We see the eminent divine and leader of a great party in the undress of his private thoughts and habitudes—the world shut out, and the roar of its great Babel subdued by distance, scarcely stirring the calm complacency and enjoyment of the private Christian.

THE PERTH ADVERTISER. Certainly a more attractive volume has seldom or never been presented to the Christian public. The "Daily Readings," with the exception of about forty pages, under the title of "Sabbath Exercises," extend, in this volume, from Genesis to Joshua, and consist of reflections and remarks on the various passages perused by the lamented author during his progress through the Sacred Record. They were commenced in 1841; and when we remember the almost Herculean task that devolved on Dr. Chalmers subsequent to that period, and the anxious and distracting cares that could not fail, we think, to agitate and overwhelm the mind of any ordinary man, we may be enabled to form some idea of the intenseness of the love he bore to his Master's revelation, when we find him so uninterruptedly, and apparently so gladly, returning to his labour of love......We cannot refrain from noticing and expressing our high admiration at the beautiful manner in which the work promises to be given to the world, and of which this volume is a specimen.

THE LIVERPOOL COURIER. The volume before us is the first of three, entitled "Daily Scripture Readings;" and it is one of the most beautiful works, whether in point of matter or printing, that we have ever seen. The whole Christian Church will welcome this last gift of one of its brightest ornaments in modern times, and we have no doubt that it will be found highly useful as an addition to our religious literature.

LONDONDERRY STANDARD. In the Scriptural expositions contained in the work before us, there is comparatively little of a merely critical character, and no ambition whatever of displaying any of the artificial accomplishments of mere style. It was impossible for Dr. Chalmers, had he been so inclined, to avoid the embodiment of beauties, which were to him a natural element of his own mental constitution; but, in the work before us, he has rather avoided than sought for them. Edification was manifestly his aim, and he has amply attained that aim, while, from the purity and earnestness of his practical applications, as well as from the spirit of searching, and self-correcting examination which prevails throughout, we anticipate, on behalf of the work before us, an amount both of circulation and of usefulness, far surpassing, in these respects, all the author's former publications.

THE STIRLING OBSERVER. Dr. Chalmers did not intend to write a commentary on the Scriptures, but merely to place upon record, every day of the week, the lessons which a mind such as his—matured above those of many others—derived from the passage read, comparing and illustrating every particular passage with others which suggested themselves at the time, as bearing upon the subject, or arising out of it, which latter frequently happens in the volume now before us. In this plain, unadorned, and simple, yet manly and truly Christian proceeding, we have a much better idea of the great man—the humble and sincere follower of the greatest of all masters—of the devoted minister of Christ—and also of the firm and resolute champion, who would, rather than forsake a good and noble Christian cause, suffer for it, aye, and labour for it too. In this volume we see Dr. Chalmers at his daily devotion, and are able to appreciate, in some measure, the yearnings of his soul after the most intimate connexion with divine truth which it is possible to arrive at on this side of immortality.

GLASGOW CONSTITUTIONAL. This is a plain, simple, and popular commentary, with no pretensions to learning or research, deriving its interest wholly from the mind and character of the author......It adds to the interest of the book, that the author's daily exposition not unfrequently reflects the thoughts on public affairs which were agitating his mind, during this busy and eventful period of his life.

THE LONDONDERRY SENTINEL. The *Daily Scripture Readings* begin with Genesis, and are carried down to the end of Jeremiah. They are not what can be designated a commentary, but yet they shed a new and most engaging light upon many a passage of holy writ, containing in a short compass, "the mature fruits of a whole lifetime's study of the Divine Oracles." The writer jotted down, in a few brief sentences, the ideas which the portion of Scripture just read suggested to his mind; and while the thoughts are singularly forcible and impressive, they open up fresh and inexhaustible channels for reflection to every Christian reader. Sometimes a philosophical problem is presented to us, and the mysterious processes of the genesis of the world we inhabit are brought under consideration, when some half-dozen sentences supply the materials for reconciling the theories of modern geologists with the infallible testimony of the Word of God. Sometimes we have a pleasing sketch of natural scenery, or some engaging incident in the history of patriarchal times is brought before us, when the features of the landscape, or

the moral characteristics of individuals or families, are portrayed in vivid colouring, and with more than the artist's skill.* We turn to another page, and the author is elucidating some abstruse doctrine of the Bible, or bending in humble adoration at the footstool of Jehovah, and making a practical application of what he has read to his own heart and circumstances. Everywhere, indeed, do we recognise traces of great and varied learning, of profound and original thought, and of unaffected humility. His mind seems, moreover, to have been remarkably free from sectarian influences. He states, without prejudice or reserve, the impression which each passage makes upon him, regardless whether it clashes with existing systems or pre-conceived notions or not; but although he writes frankly and uncompromisingly, his tone bespeaks the deepest self-abasement throughout...... This work is unlike, in style and substance, to any other of Dr. Chalmers'; but the same masculine vigour of thought and expression, the same vast erudition, the same richness and variety of imagery, and the same earnestness and sincerity of purpose which characterize his other productions, pervade it in every part.

THE ELGIN COURIER.

The "Daily Readings" are not, neither were they intended to be, elaborate expositions of Holy Writ: they are "his first and readiest thoughts, clothed in his first and readiest words." Though in one respect this may be a disadvantage to the reader, inasmuch as there is no lengthened, critical, historical, or doctrinal investigations; in another aspect it is beneficial, being calculated to lead Christians in their private readings into a similar train of thought, and to see the Scriptures through a different medium than formerly. But though there is no attempt here at Biblical criticism, or learned theological discussion, there is in every passage the stamp of genius—the same richness of thought, felicity of expression, peculiarity of phraseology, and touches of genuine pathos and natural feeling, which render all his works so attractive. The author is seen in every passage; whether he follows the venerable patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, dwells on the simplicity of patriarchal manners, speaks of patriarchal hospitality, lingers with Hagar in the wilderness, or elucidates the peculiarities of the Rachels and Rebekahs.

The following Articles were contributed by Dr. Chalmers to
THE NORTH BRITISH REVIEW.

No. I. Art. 1.—ON THE CORN LAWS.
No. III. Art. 1.—ON THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF THE BIBLE.
No. IV. Art. 7.—REPORT ON THE POOR LAWS OF SCOTLAND.
No. XI. Art. 4.—STIRLING'S PHILOSOPHY OF TRADE.
No. XII. Art. 1.—MORELL'S MODERN PHILOSOPHY.
No. XIII. Art. 9.—POLITICAL ECONOMY OF A FAMINE.

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